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Terror in the Soviet System: Trends and Portents

By Wolfgang Leonhard

THERE CAN NO LONGER be any doubt that since the spring of 1957, but most conspicuously in the past six months, the pendulum of Soviet policy has been swinging back toward a more harsh and rigid political line. Prior to that time, for about four years following the death of Stalin, the actions of his successors had furnished substantial evidence of a general relaxation of political pressures and, in particular, of a significant curtailment of the Stalinist apparatus of terror. Today, little outward trace remains of these "liberalizing" tendencies, and the bulk of recent evidence indicates a trend in the opposite direction.

One of the signs of the reversal has been the almost complete quiescence, since the end of 1956, of the once loudly proclaimed campaign of the post-Stalin leadership to promote "socialist legality." Public attacks on the state security service and trials of its high officials for abuses of authority have ceased, and the regime has called a halt to symbolic "rehabilitations" of past victims of police or judicial injustice. These domestic portents of a stiffening disciplinary line have been reinforced, externally, by the renewal of Moscow's cold war against Belgrade, by the determined drive to stamp out "revisionism" from the world Communist movement, and most of all by the trial and execution last June of former Premier Imre Nagy and his closest associates in the 1956 Hungarian revolt.

The ruthless liquidation of Nagy was a significant event, not so much because of the profound moral indignation which it evoked around the world, but because it compellingly redirected attention to the whole question of the future evolution of the role of terror in Soviet totalitarianism. Does the current retrogressive trend of Soviet policy so tragically underscored by Nagy's martyrdom, foreshadow an eventual return to the Stalinist system of terror, though perhaps in slightly "modernized" form? Or, alternatively, must the curbing of the terror apparatus after Stalin's death be viewed as part of a deep-seated process of change which, though temporarily held in check by the current trend toward reaction, nevertheless remains a basic tendency of Soviet development? While no unequivocal answers are possible at present, a re-examination of the actions of Stalin's successors relative to the terror will perhaps help to clarify the motivations behind them and permit a cautious weighing of future prospects.

The Impact of Stalin's Death

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the turn against Stalinist terror was the swiftness with which it followed upon the dictator's death. The officially announced date of Stalin's death was March 5, 1953. Hardly more than three weeks later, on March 27, an amnesty was proclaimed for persons serving prison sentences of not more than five years, as well as for aged and sick pris-

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oners.[1] Although the amnesty terms specifically excluded the most important group of terror victims, namely those convicted of "counterrevolutionary" crimes, the measure was nonetheless a significant first sign of a change of policy and was further backed up by a simultaneous promise for reform of the criminal code.

A much more spectacular move followed on April 4, when the new leadership repudiated the notorious "Kremlin doctors' trial" of January 1953 and exonerated those who had been convicted of conspiring against the lives of Soviet officials. Concurrently, the investigative organs of the Ministry of State Security came under unprecedented public attack for having resorted to methods of examination "stringently prohibited by Soviet law"—the first time that the "law" had been advanced as a valid restriction upon the security agencies.

On April 6, *Pravda* carried the onslaught against the Stalinist terror apparatus still farther and sounded the keynote of the ensuing campaign for "socialist legality." Two top security officials—Semeon Ignatiev, Minister of State Security, and Mikhail Ryumin, Chief of the Investigative Division—as well as "others" not explicitly identified were accused of having "trampled underfoot the inviolable rights of the Soviet citizen" guaranteed by the Soviet constitution. The government, declared *Pravda,* would take resolute, implacable action to uncover and extirpate all arbitrary and unlawful acts, so that Soviet citizens would henceforth be secure "in the consciousness that their civic rights stood under the trustworthy protection of Soviet socialist legality." [2]

THUS, WITHIN the space of a month after Stalin's death, the new leadership moved decisively toward a relaxation of the Stalinist reign of terror. The very alacrity with which it acted was clearly indicative of one of the most impelling motivations behind the turn of policy—the desire of the new leaders to escape from the oppressive sense of fear and personal insecurity under which they had labored as Stalin's subordinates.

The urgency of this desire reflected the fact that the threat to the safety of the members of the ruling circle itself had never been greater than in the final months of the Stalin era. Following the Nineteenth Party Congress in October 1952, a new campaign of "vigilance" had been launched, steadily mounting in intensity and resulting, in December, in the imposition of the first death sentences, directed against Jewish economic functionaries in the Ukraine. Shortly thereafter, on December 24, an article in *Pravda* by Mikhail A. Suslov (then a member of the newly-organized CPSU Presidium) contained ominous hints of a wider purge of the state and economic bureaucracies. The fact that Suslov centered his attack on Nikolai Voznesensky, former Deputy Premier and Chairman of the State Planning Commission, who had mysteriously disappeared in 1949, suggested that the purge might fall on anyone who could be shown to have had links with Voznesensky in the past—a criterion which placed many officials in imminent danger.

It was, however, the "Kremlin doctors' plot," revealed in mid-January 1953, which finally touched off the last large-scale purge of the Stalin era. With the baring of the plot, the vigilance campaign became a hysterical wave of terror. The purge at first appeared to have a strong anti-Semitic orientation stemming from the fact that a majority of the accused doctors were Jewish and were alleged to have acted in league with international Jewish organizations. However, as the purge progressed, the increasing categories of persons subjected to attack and denunciation in the press made it evident that the impact was by no means confined to Jewish intellectual circles but touched several groups, falling most heavily of all on the economic bureaucracy. The frequent citation in the press of statements by Stalin dating back to 1937 underscored the fact that the country was being subjected not just to a vigilance campaign or an "ordinary" purge, but to a "great purge" on the scale of those of 1936-38.

In these circumstances, fear spread even to the top levels of the party hierarchy. The position of some of its component elements, particularly of the "Old Bolsheviks," had been rendered more precarious by Stalin's reorganization of the key party organs at the time of the Nineteenth Congress. Replacement of the old Politburo by an enlarged Central Committee Presidum of 25 members, and the simultaneous expansion of the Secretariat to ten members, had, in effect, fortified Stalin's controlling position and made it easier for him to get rid of any who failed to back his policies with sufficient enthusiasm. It was significant in this connection that none of the "old guard" members of the leadership had come out publicly in support of the vigilance campaign since the Nineteenth Congress. Viewed in this light, Khrushchev's affirmation in his "secret report" to the Twentieth Congress that Stalin, prior to his death, had already marked Mikoyan, Molotov and Voroshilov as the next victims to be purged, appears entirely plausible.

[1] *Pravda*, March 28, 1953. For an analysis of the amnesty, see Vladimir Gsovsky, "The Soviet Amnesty," *Problems of Communism,* No. 6, 1953; and Reinhard Maurach, *"Das sowjetische Amnestiegesetz"* (The Soviet Amnesty Law), *Osteuropa* (Stuttgart) Spring 1953.

[2] *Pravda,* April 6, 1953. Also, *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo,* (Moscow), No. 2/3, 1953, p. 19.

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All this points to the conclusion that on the eve of the dictator's death there were, within the ruling circle itself, strong undercurrents of apprehension and of opposition to the continuation of the wave of terror. Hence, the subsequent rapid shift of course is readily understandable. The initial steps of relaxation taken by the new leadership—from the amnesty proclamation to the launching of the "socialist legality" campaign—represented an instinctive reflex action on the part of men who had been placed in jeopardy by Stalin's unbridled terror policies and whose first impulse was to terminate the threat to their own safety.

The Role of Terror under Stalin

But while the leaders' desire for personal security undoubtedly provided the initial impetus for the change of course, it is hardly enough to explain the broad scope of the measures taken in the course of the next four years to curb the Stalinist terror apparatus. The fundamental explanation of this phenomenon, in the author's view, is to be found in the vital transformation which took place in the function of the terror apparatus during Stalin's rule.

It was by no means accidental that Khrushchev, in his Twentieth Congress report, confined his denunciation of Stalin's policies to the period after 1934. Up until then the terror apparatus had been an instrument of the Stalinist upper stratum as a whole and had been employed almost exclusively against factions or groups outside itself—against Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Bukharinites within the party, against real or alleged "national deviationists," against surviving members of the bourgeois intelligentsia. The upper stratum itself had remained virtually immune from the terror. Consequently, when its representatives assembled in January 1934 for the Seventeenth CPSU Congress, dubbed the "Party Congress of the Victors," those present could not have suspected that within a few years most of their number would no longer be counted among the "victors," but among the vanquished.

The Congress, however, marked an important turning point in Soviet political evolution—the beginning of what might be termed the "splitting up" of the upper stratum. As a result of agricultural collectivization and the completion of the first Five-Year Plan of industrialization, the ruling elite had not only vastly increased in numbers but had acquired augmented functions, privileges and power; and the pace of this expansion continued to accelerate with each year of further industrialization. At the same time, the emergence of clearly-defined functional groups within the upper stratum—representing the party, state, army, security organs, and economy—brought into being powerful divisive forces. With often conflicting tasks to perform, the various groups tended more and more to develop conflicting interests and to become rival contenders for political influence.

Particularly in the ranks of the economic bureaucracy (inclusive of state functionaries concerned with economic administration), and also to a significant extent in the army officer corps, there were signs of growing aspirations for greater security, more normal living and working conditions, increased independence and initiative, and relief from the pressures of incessant political campaigns and police snooping. Such tendencies, however, posed a dangerous threat to the two main pillars of Stalin's autocratic rule, the party apparatus and the organs of state security, whose respective claims to be the dominant forces in the state could be upheld and justified only through continuous political campaigning by the party and unremitting vigilance campaigns and purges carried out by the security organs against internal enemies.

Stalin found the answer to this threat in the transformation of the terror apparatus from an instrument of self-protection for the upper stratum as a whole into a weapon for safeguarding the power monopoly of the Stalinist minority against challenge from any segment of the ruling class. Thus, after the middle 1930's, the function of terror became more and more that of enforcing Stalin's "revolution from above," receiving its first grim application in the purges of 1936-38, which exacted the bulk of their victims from the ranks of the upper stratum itself. It is largely to this change of function that the powerful momentum generated by the post-Stalin move to curb the terror apparatus must be ascribed. For while the move was initiated from the top, it obviously corresponded to the desires and interests of the vast majority of the Soviet ruling class.

The Anti-Terror Trials

A detailed discussion of all the individual measures taken to constrict the activities and power of the Stalinist terror apparatus during the 1953-56 period would obviously go beyond the limited scope of the present article. For the author's purposes, it will suffice to sketch a general picture of the principal lines of action adopted by the post-Stalin leadership and the objectives which they sought to accomplish.

By far the most decisive phase of the anti-terror campaign in terms of political impact was the series of public accusations, dismissals, and punitive trials of leading officials of the state security organization. *Pravda's*

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earlier-mentioned denunciation of State Security Minister Ignatiev and others in connection with the repudiation of the Kremlin doctors' trial was only the prelude to the main onslaught which began in July 1953 with the arrest of the supreme head of the Soviet security structure, Lavrenti Beria. The first of the anti-terror trials followed in December 1953, resulting in Beria's execution together with six other high security officials, including the former Minister of State Control, V. N. Merkulov. The later trials, briefly listed, were those of Mikhail Ryumin (July 1954), of eight security officials of the Georgian Republic (September 1955), and of Mir Dzhafar Bagirov, former secret police chief in Azerbaijan, and some of his aides (April 1956).

In all of the trials the charges brought against the accused were essentially the same: that they had been responsible for the arrest and imprisonment of large numbers of innocent Soviet citizens, including party officials as well as members of the intelligentsia, and had encouraged or tolerated the extortion of false confessions and testimony from prisoners by criminal methods contrary to Soviet law. (Only Beria was charged, in addition, with the still graver crime of espionage on behalf of foreign countries.) In the 1955 trial of Georgian security officials, the charges included specific reference to arrests of innocent functionaries in 1937, marking the first time that Stalin's Great Purge was called into question.

While the trials thus were clearly intended to discredit the security apparatus by fixing upon it the blame for past terrorist excesses, it was equally obvious that this was but part of their underlying political objective —to deprive the security apparatus, through the removal of its key leaders, of the dominant power position which it had attained under Stalin and thus pave the way for its resubordination to the supreme authority of the party. In the first few months after Stalin's death, it should be noted, there had been evidences of a tendency to emphasize the primacy of the government rather than that of the party in connection with the initial moves against the security apparatus. However, with the overthrow of Beria, the party reasserted its claim to political predominance in unmistakable terms. In its article accompanying the announcement of Beria's arrest and removal from office, *Pravda* (July 10, 1953) declared:

> **The party organizations must exercise regular and systematic surveillance over the work of all organizations and governmental offices as well as the activity of all leading officials. In line with this, it is necessary to maintain systematic and continuous supervision over the activity of the organs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. That is not merely the right, but the direct duty of the party organizations.**

This unequivocal assertion of "the leading role of the party" in relation to the organs of state security made clear the basic political objective not only of the move against Beria but of the whole series of trials of key security officials during 1953-56. The same principle was reiterated in many later statements, typical of which was the declaration by R. A. Rudenko, appointed Prosecutor-General of the USSR following Beria's fall, that "the activity of all elements of the Soviet apparatus, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is subject to the continuous and systematic surveillance of the party." [3] Reinforcement of the party's control also appears to have been one of the main objectives of the March 1954 reorganization which replaced the Ministry of State Security by the present Committee of State Security (KGB) under General Ivan Serov, as well as the replacement of former Minister of Internal Affairs Sergei Kruglov by Nikolai Dudorov, a trusted party man, in February 1956.

At the Twentieth CPSU Congress, the subordination of the security apparatus to the authority of the party leadership was heavily re-emphasized by Khrushchev. He stated that the party Central Committee, starting out from the Beria case and the Leningrad affair of 1949, had "re-examined a number of questionable trials" and taken action to rehabilitate the unjustly condemned persons. The activity of the state security organs, he added, had been "placed under the requisite control of the party and government."

Constriction of Functions

Parallel with the anti-terror trials and related actions designed to subordinate the security organs to party control, the post-Stalin leadership also took steps to strip the security apparatus of certain special functions which had been instrumental in enabling it, during the last two decades of the Stalin era, to exercise authority over the other organs of power, including the party apparatus. The most important measure in this category was the abolition, in September 1954, of the "special boards" of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Established under a decree of December 1, 1934, the special boards had been empowered to apply summary trial procedures in all cases involving "the preparation or perpetration of terroristic acts," and to carry out death sentences imposed in such cases "immediately upon pronouncement of sentence." [4] They had played a particularly large and ominous role in Stalin's purges of the

[3] *Pravda*, January 5, 1954.

[4] *Ost-Probleme* (Bad Godesberg), No. 36 (September 1956) p. 1241.

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latter 1930's, but their dreaded authority had made itself felt even in "normal times," not least among members of the party apparatus.

There is no question that the abolition of the special boards dealt a decisive blow to one of the key foundations of the former political power of the security apparatus. Apart from this political aspect, however, the measure has also been the subject of widely divergent evaluations from the standpoint of its importance as a step toward liberalizing the Soviet legal and judicial system.[5] In the author's view, its significance in this respect is certainly not to be underrated, but at the same time it must be recognized that, so long as the elimination of the special boards is not buttressed by more positive and solid guarantees of the citizen's legal rights, the Soviet leadership will retain ample capability of reverting to similar practices in the future, even if not to the same extent as in the Stalin era.

The abolition of the special boards was for a long time not publicized in the Soviet Union, the first reference to it appearing only in January 1956,[6] while the official announcement came even later, following the Twentieth Party Congress. Since then, the Moscow periodical *Partiinaia zhizn* (Party Life) has mentioned a further restriction of the judicial functions of the security apparatus, purportedly put into effect simultaneously with the abolition of the special boards in September 1953: the elimination of the military tribunals of the MVD forces.[7]

Of almost equal significance were the steps taken to curtail the special functions of the security apparatus in the economic area. After the fall of Beria, the industrial installations in the prison camps, which hitherto had been under the control of the Ministries of Internal Affairs and State Security, were transferred to the jurisdiction of the various economic ministries. While there has still been no official announcement of this important change, the first reports of it which came from liberated prisoners have since been corroborated by indirect references in Soviet publications.[8]

The reasons which prompted the removal of the economic installations attached to the camps from the control of the security organs were, without doubt, mainly political. However, the gradual ameliorative changes subsequently introduced in the camp system itself were probably influenced to a large degree by economic considerations. Prison camp labor, actually slave labor, was found to be economically inefficient, and it was therefore realized that greater productivity required the substitution of economic incentives for the whip of the MVD.

ALTHOUGH THE CHANGES were introduced in cautious, piecemeal fashion and still have not been fully publicized in the Soviet press, accounts given by returnees from the camps have supplied the essential facts. One important change reported to have been instituted in April 1954 was the introduction of the *zachot* system whereby prisoners overfulfilling their production quotas could obtain a reduction of their terms of imprisonment, some camps even applying the system retroactively. There were also reports of the establishment of judicial review boards to hear prisoners' applications for a revision of sentence and empowered to give immediate effect to their decisions.[9] Returnees from many different camps uniformly reported that large groups of prisoners had been released outright.[10]

At the same time, those remaining in the camps were granted various concessions such as the abolition of prison uniforms, better food, and the privilege of obtaining writing materials, books, and newspapers.[11] Prisoners of Soviet nationality, starting in the summer of 1954, were allowed to receive visits from members of their families, and in some instances were given permission to live outside the camps, reporting to them each day for work.[12]

The culminating step in the gradual reformation of the camp system was the start of an extensive conversion of the camps into so-called "re-education-by-labor colonies" *(ispravitelno trudovye kolonii)*, the essential feature of which is that prisoners are committed to designated regions but, instead of being confined within camp installations, are allowed to live at liberty and work for pay as free laborers, though prohibited from moving outside their assigned region. Like the earlier reforms,

[5] For two contrasting views, see: Harold J. Berman, "Law Reform in the Soviet Union," *The American Slavic and East European Review*, April 1956; and Leon Lipson, "The New Face of Socialist Legality," *Problems of Communism*, No. 4, 1958.

[6] Editorial in *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo* (Moscow) No. 1, January 1956.

[7] *Partiinaia zhizn* (Moscow) No. 4, 1957, p. 68.

[8] Gregory Grossman, "In the Land of Paper Pyramids," *Problems of Communism*, No. 4, 1955, p. 19. Cf. Paul Barton, "Have the Soviet Camps Taken a New Turn?" *Saturn* (Paris) No. 2, 1956, pp. 17-18

[9] Alfred Burmeister, "The End of Forced Labor?" *Encounter* (London) April 1956, pp. 49-52.

[10] Bernhard Roeder, *Der Katorgan* (The Convict), Kiepenheuer & Witsch, Koln, p. 220 ff.

[11] W. Claudius, "In a Soviet Isolator," *Soviet Affairs, St. Antony's Papers* No. 1, Chatto & Windus, London, 1956, pp. 137-139.

[12] Herbert Passin and Fritz van Briessen, "The Strike at Norilsk," *Encounter* (London), April 1956, pp. 61-63.

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the conversion process was not publicized and presumably was already substantially completed by the time *Partiinaia zhizn,* using the roundabout device of a reply to a reader's inquiry, confirmed it in the spring of 1957. The periodical stated that the substitution of the colonies for the former "re-education-by-labor camps" *(ispravitelno-trudovye lagerya)* had been decided because the latter were "considered impractical," and it indicated that the internal organization of the colonies and the "successful re-education" of persons committed to them were the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR and of the governments of the Union republics.[13] (It is interesting to note that no mention was made of the Committee of State Security in connection with the administration of the colonies.)

Outlook for the Future

There is little question that the whole body of measures summarized above, through their effective curtailment of the oppressive power of the security apparatus, brought substantial benefits to the Soviet citizen. To these benefits must also be added those flowing from the various other measures of legislative and judicial reform instituted more specifically as part of the concurrent campaign for "socialist legality," and not dealt with in the present article.[14]

But while the sum total of these changes represented a significant degree of progress against the dark background of latter-day Stalinism, one must also recognize that they represented a carefully controlled and limited move toward relaxation. This was implicit in the cautious, halting, and indeed almost secretive manner in which many of the reform measures were put into effect, for it clearly showed that the post-Stalin leadership was fearful lest too much public airing of the misdeeds of the security apparatus and the evils of the camp system during the Stalin era touch off currents, tendencies and pressures conducive toward overshooting the limited goals it had in mind.

Looking back over the course of the anti-terror campaign, it is evident that it displayed its greatest impetus in the first two years following Stalin's death, with another brief period of revived activity in the spring of 1956 following the Twentieth Congress. The first indications of a gradual turn away from the policies of relaxation became evident following the Hungarian revolt in late 1956. It seems significant that since then virtually all references to the campaign for "socialist legality" have been couched in the past tense, implying that everything necessary has already been done to ensure against the recurrence of arbitrary and illegal acts.

This brings us to the final question of whether the much harder line of Soviet policy in the last six months signifies a tendency on the part of the present Soviet leadership to move back toward the Stalinist system of terror, and whether, indeed, such a return can still be regarded as a practical possibility. The divergent views on this question may be reduced, essentially, to two basic theses.

According to the first thesis, terror has always been and will remain an inseparable, even dominant, part of the Soviet system. To be sure, argue its proponents, the terror apparatus was curtailed after Stalin's death, large numbers of prisoners were released from the camps, and steps were taken to correct certain abuses, but these developments signified no fundamental change in the nature of the system. On the contrary, they represented merely a temporary mitigation of the terror attributable to disunity within the leadership during the crisis attending the struggle for power among Stalin's successors. Now that the struggle for the succession has been decided and Khrushchev's predominance firmly established, the normal tendencies inherent in Soviet totalitarianism are reasserting themselves in a trend back toward Stalinist terror, the first sign of which was the sentencing to death of the Hungarian revolt leaders.

The second thesis, on the other hand, denies that Stalinist terror is inherent in the Soviet system. Instead, it views this phenomenon as the outgrowth of the peculiar circumstances of Soviet historical development: a victorious revolution in a backward country; a prolonged period of civil war, foreign intervention, and blockade; the failure of the expected revolution to materialize in other countries; and finally the seizure of power by the Stalinist faction which, under the banner of "socialism in one country," was determined (or felt compelled) to impose industrialization and collectivization upon the country by whatever methods were necessary, no matter how ruthless and brutal. However, the development of a modern industrial society, with a growing technological intelligentsia and an expanding educational system turn-

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[13] *"Chto sdelano dlia ukrepleniia sotsialisticheski zakonnosti"* (What Was Done to Strengthen Socialist Legality), *Partiinaia zhizn,* No. 4, 1957, pp. 66-71.

[14] For an analysis of post-Stalin judicial reforms, see: Vladimir Gsovsky, "New Trends in Soviet Justice," *Problems of Communism,* No. 1, 1956; Dietrich Loeber, *"Sowjetische Gesetzlichkeit im Zeichen des 20. Parteikongresses der KPdSU"* (Soviet Legality under the Impact of the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU), *Osteuropa-Recht* (Stuttgart), October 1956; and Lothar Schultz, *"Die Entwicklung der Rechtswissenschaft seit Stalins Tod"* (The Development of Jurisprudence since Stalin's Death), *Osteuropa-Recht,* December, 1955.

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ing out steadily increasing numbers of university graduates, eventually created both the necessary conditions for, and powerful pressures toward, the abandonment of the Stalinist regimen of terror and liberalization of the system of political rule. The post-Stalin moves to curb the terror apparatus, relax political controls, and set up stronger safeguards of legality represented the first flowering of these evolutionary forces, and the current reactionary trend is only a passing phase which will again yield to the more deep-seated process of change.

In the author's view, both theses contain elements of truth, and both show defects of onesidedness. The first places the entire emphasis on the power apparatus, its continuity and supposed immutability, and thus underestimates the importance of the new conditions, currents and tendencies which have come into play with the emergence of a modern industrial society, and which have already shown their capacity to affect the system in important ways. The second places the whole emphasis on the latter factors and thus tends to lead to the too hasty and overoptimistic conclusion that these new social forces and tendencies must inevitably, by a sort of automatic process, bring about the dismantling of the terror apparatus and political democratization.

It is the author's impression that the Soviet scene since Stalin's death has, in fact, reflected the existence and operation of *both* opposing sets of forces. There can be no question that conditions have changed, that new social forces are at work in the economy, among the youth, the intellectuals, and even the party cadres. But these forces will by no means automatically bring about a process of democratization, for the system rests upon a vast and well-organized apparatus which, as the events of the past few years have demonstrated, operates resolutely to keep too far-reaching reform tendencies in check, and which shrinks neither from armed intervention, as in Hungary, nor from acts of ruthlessness, as in the execution of Nagy, in order to safeguard its monopoly of power.

Nevertheless, neither the system as a whole nor the machinery of control in particular can be regarded as static and immutable. The developments since Stalin's death have indeed demonstrated quite clearly that the leadership takes due account of the new conditions, and that it is in fact no longer able simply to ignore the currents and tendencies prevalent in Soviet society. Economic ambitions, too—such as the regime's aim to catch up with the United States in certain areas of production—dictate the gradual replacement of administrative coercion by greater economic incentives or, as it is expressed in Soviet parlance, the principle of "material interest." In not a few instances, the post-Stalinist leadership has readily discarded outmoded Stalinist patterns of control no longer suited to present conditions; yet it is careful never to carry such action to the point of compromising its final controlling authority.

The zigzag course of Soviet policy in regard to the terror, as indeed of the general Soviet political line, reflects these divergent tendencies. The past several months have furnished clear indications of a hardening of the line, and it is entirely possible that the immediate future may witness a renewed, though probably carefully measured, build-up of the terror apparatus. This might even conceivably be accompanied by new purge trials involving former members of the leadership who, in the past few years of Khrushchev's capture of preeminent power, have been ousted or demoted under a barrage of political accusations.

Yet it is doubtful that the present leadership could return full circle to the methods of Stalinist terror. This seems unlikely for two reasons: first, because general Soviet conditions have changed materially since the Stalin era, one of them being the disrepute into which the terror apparatus was thrown by the post-Stalin campaign against it; and second, because a return to Stalinist terror policies would necessarily involve stirring up a new "vigilance" hysteria with all its negative consequences for the growth of the economy. Even so, the terror apparatus will remain—perhaps inoperative at times, but always ready to be used whenever the Soviet leaders so choose and desire.

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New Phase of Mao's Revolution

By G. F. Hudson

A SHANGHAI REPAIR SHOP in former days is said to have proudly displayed a placard in English reading: "Any mortal thing can do." With suitable adaptation to the jargon of modern Communist boast-and-boost propaganda, the phrase might well be taken to express the spirit of the new phase of the Chinese Communist revolution initiated by the special "second session" of the Eighth Party Congress of the CPC held in May of this year (the original session having been convened in September 1956). The opening of the Congress on May 5 coincided with the publication in the party organ *Jen-min jih-pao* of the tirade against Tito which launched the new drive against the Yugoslav heresy in the Communist world, and the proceedings of the Congress (in so far as they were reported, which was only partially) were marked by a combination of invective against revisionism (and its Chinese equivalent, "bourgeois rightism") and demands for "leaping progress" in economic expansion.

The two themes were linked together by the contention that revisionism, at least in its indirect influence, was to blame for the slow development of production: the creative urge of the masses, craving the opportunity to forge ahead at high speed, was being thwarted and frustrated by the faint-hearted caution of officials and managers who underestimated the productive potential of the Chinese people. The task of the party cadres was now not so much to stimulate the masses to greater efforts as to break down the obstacles, ultimately of an ideological character, which were "restricting the forces of production" already operative. Mao Tse-tung was quoted as declaring that "the liberation of the productive force of the laboring people has the same effect as the smashing of the nucleus of an atom."

The new phase of Chinese communism must be viewed in relation to the situation which confronted the leadership during the first four months of 1958. There were signs that this situation was considered far from satisfactory, whether from the political or from the economic angle. Politically, the period of the "hundred flowers" had been extremely disturbing and demoralizing. Although we cannot know even now quite what was going on in the seats of power in Peiping when the policy was tried out, it seems better to regard it as an experiment in relaxation which got out of control rather than as a cleverly laid trap to bring concealed opponents out into the open. No regime, even with the intention of operating as an *agent provocateur*, could really have wanted the blasts of only too telling criticism to which the institutions and policies of Communist China were exposed, by license from itself, in the spring of last year. The dangerous thoughts were, indeed, quickly driven underground again, and the critics vilified and humiliated, but immense damage had already been done. The seeds of doubt had been sown everywhere, and the work of years of indoctrination and propaganda suddenly upset, by a few weeks of free speech. The intensity of the campaign against revisionism, which continued in growing volume after all public antagonism to the regime had been silenced, was evidence of the wide circulation of the ideas expressed during the interlude of toleration, and of the seriousness with which the Communist leadership regarded this opposition.

Moreover, at the same time that the party had to cope with the political disarray resulting from its ill-judged attempt to combine an ideological dictatorship with a measure of intellectual liberty, it was also confronted with alarming difficulties on the economic front. Having collectivized agriculture and virtually expropriated the remaining private sectors of industry during 1955-56, the regime now found itself directly responsible for all branches of the national economy and discovered that in many of them its administration had been unequal to the task. The press was filled with complaints of bottlenecks and shortages, of targets unattained and work held up for lack of essential supplies.

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In most cases there is no reason to suppose that these muddles and failures were due to anything but the inexperience and incompetence to be expected in the early stages of a planned economy, but the unsettling and bewildering effects of the unleashing of criticism in 1957 may also have been an important factor adverse to the singleminded zeal required for a great production drive. Mao Tse-tung at any rate appears to have viewed the shortcomings in the economic field as largely the outcome of a political inadequacy, and to have decided to overcome the economic obstacles by a new political campaign. Instead of concluding from the failure to reach set targets that these had been too high, he inferred that they had been too low, and the planners were charged with the political sin of insufficient faith in the capacities of the people. The officials of the Ministry of Coal, who had failed to keep factories properly supplied, were told that they had been "suppressing rather than encouraging the initiative of the masses," and were ordered to increase production by 40 percent in the coming year. All production targets were revised upwards, often drastically, and any suggestions that they were impossible of fulfilment were now attributed not to any honest technical misgivings (which might be well- or ill-founded), but to a basic ideological defect tending toward revisionist heresy and liable to end in counterrevolution.

The whole idea of gradual economic progress now fell under a ban; progress should be by "leaps." Nothing was impossible for China's vast population, and officials in charge of production must cease to obstruct its wonder-working "initiative." Whether the masses really had any such initiative outside the minds of Mao and his associates was not a question which could be discussed; it had to be accepted as an article of faith, and the masses themselves had to conform to the Communist picture of them, for if anyone were to resist or oppose the imposition of increased tasks decreed by the popular will, he would be clearly marked by such an attitude as a counterrevolutionary. Thus, while the Communist leaders were representing themselves as merely deferring to a mass initiative, they were at the same time preparing to justify a great campaign of repression and coercion in the name of removing impediments to the will of the people.

The Role of the "Communes"

It soon became apparent that the new effort at economic expansion was no ordinary production drive, but a new stage of the revolution, in which a further transformation of society was to be carried out concurrently with a decisive breakthrough in the process of industrializing China. All difficulties were to be overcome by taking the offensive, by a relentless attack carried out with what used to be called, in the days of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, "Bolshevik firmness." To maximize the productive force of the masses and operate it with a minimum of capital equipment and virtually without incentives in the form of immediate improvements in standards of living, a new form of social organization was needed, and this was to be provided by so-called "communes." These institutions were sprung quite suddenly on the Chinese people; mass propaganda for them began only in July. But once started, they multiplied at high speed during August and September, and it probably was not altogether a coincidence that this same period witnessed the deliberate creation by Peiping of the international crisis over Quemoy.

The significance of the communes can be studied on two levels—the practical and the theoretical. To consider the practical first, the commune appears intended as an appropriate answer to a number of difficulties which have confronted the Communists in their attempt to carry out "socialist construction" in China. One of the most formidable of these has been the government's failure to control the movement of labor between the countryside and the towns. Of course, the industrialization of China required in any case that large numbers of workers be drawn from the rural areas into industry, but owing to the frequent revisions of plans and the difficulties of estimating labor requirements, there has been a tendency for peasants attracted by hopes of better conditions of life than in the villages, to migrate to the towns in numbers far greater than have been needed, resulting in large-scale urban unemployment. To cope with these uncontrolled movements of labor, the Communists have worked out schemes for labor brigades which can be directed to work either in the country (including the construction of dikes and canals as well as agriculture) or in the local town, as planning requires. Since, in the average commune, an urban centre will be combined with surrounding villages in a single economic unit, it should be easier to regulate and harness the available labor force within the commune than if various industrial enterprises have to bid for labor from the collective farms.

The commune also has its advantages for a policy which seeks to combine a decentralized socialist economy with central political control. In their moves to end the excessive concentration of industry and make fuller use of a dispersed workshop production in various branches of the economy, including peasant handicrafts, the Chinese Communists have certainly been following the Soviet example to some extent, but they have also been re-

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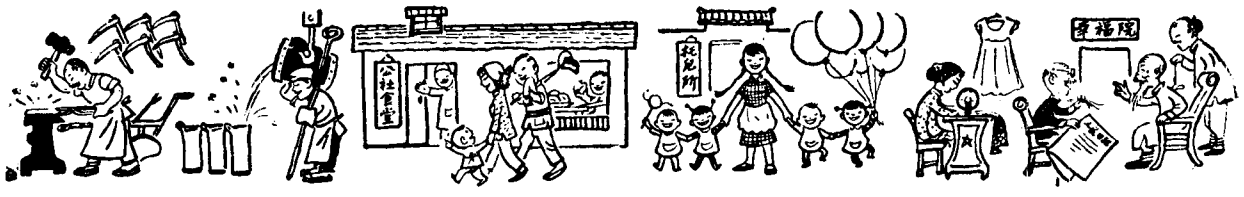
sponding to special conditions in China, among which the still serious poverty of communications and transport is the most important. But it is the natural tendency of the totalitarian state to centralize and concentrate, and if the economy is to be more dispersed and localized, a serious problem of control at once arises; moreover, when the control problem is compounded by a recent collectivization of agriculture, the situation obviously can be very formidable for the ruling party. In Russia, where the Soviet power has existed for four decades and collective farms for nearly three, and where, moreover, there was a tradition of strong centralized administration from before the Bolshevik Revolution, the difficulties are less acute than in China, where effective centralized rule has only recently been established for the first time and the total numbers of peasants brought into the collectives are nearly three times as great. In such circumstances there is a real danger that the central government may be defeated by the sheer multiplicity of the rural economic units it has to administer, and their amalgamation into fewer and larger entities offers considerable administrative advantages.

Military and Social Significance

Military considerations also have undoubtedly played a part, in both the USSR and China, in schemes for economic decentralization. The chances for any power to survive a nuclear war depend largely on the degree of peacetime dispersal of industry and administrative services; a socialist economy is especially vulnerable if it is directed from a warren of offices in a capital city which can be knocked out at one blow. From the outset Peiping has laid emphasis on the military functions of the communes; it has declared that the same organization which will be used to mobilize labor for whatever purpose it is needed can be used also for defense in time of war. It appears, indeed, that the communes are to be run on semi-military lines and that their members will form militia units available either for partisan resistance in the event of foreign invasion or for the suppression of local disturbances.

Finally, the design of economic life in the communes is aimed at breaking down what the Communists regard as the principal obstacle to the attainment of their ends —the cohesion of the family as the traditional basis of Chinese society. The principle of collective work is to be carried out thoroughly; not only are young children to be cared for in crêches so that women can work on the land or in mines and factories, but all meals are to be taken, if possible, in canteens, and household cleaning, sewing and mending will be done by squads going from house to house, so that there will be virtually nothing left to be done privately in the home; in this way it is apparently hoped that the family, already weakened by the setting of children against their parents and by the encouragement of informing to the party or the police against close relatives, will lose all significance as a social unit, since the individual will pass almost his whole life in the wider group activities of the commune.

It is primarily in this connection that the new policies in Communist China appear to be ideologically, and not just practically, significant, for they bear an imprint of utopian extremism which goes beyond anything currently practiced in Soviet Russia. In the USSR, the early visions of a perfect society without personal private property, family ties or the use of money have faded with the passing of time; in China, on the contrary, there is still a fanatical faith in the early attainment of the utopian paradise of primitive Marxism. The present drive for "leaping progress" is no doubt genuinely intended to bring about enormous increases in production, and the communes may contribute to this end: but the new, intensive attack on individualism is also conceived as an end in itself and might be continued even if it were to prove economically a mistake. The propaganda of the current campaign has been full of a quasi-religious exhortation to collectivist virtue. People are urged to forget their private interests and devote themselves to the common task with utter selflessness; they must not think about their wages or conditions of work, but only about producing "more, better, faster and more thriftily"; they must "surrender their hearts" and "break out from the small world of individualism into the big world of



A Chinese cartoon strip extols the joys of life and labor in the new communes. The unit above is

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communism." The Chinese people is being driven harder than ever before; at the same time, it is being led to expect the millenium in the near future and is being urged to an absolute break, not only with the social class order of the past, but also with all the habitual ways of living.

Quemoy and the New Line

Such pressure for total change necessarily involves high emotional tensions and strains in the population, with risks of resistance and revolt, and it is not in any way surprising that the rulers of Communist China should seek to rally popular support and close the ranks by appealing to patriotic passions against an external enemy. There is in any case the patriotic motive of making China great and powerful through industrialization and of wiping out the backwardness and humiliations of the last century. But a more immediate stimulus is also needed to forge national unity and arouse patriotic enthusiasm to its highest pitch. The Chinese nation must be rallied against "imperialism," which to Peiping means against America. There must be an apparent threat of attack, but not real danger of a major war; the external tension must be such that the government can gain prestige and make tangible gains by a strong policy in a situation verging on but not reaching large-scale belligerency.

The conditions for a policy of this kind are not easy to arrange, and any reckless adventure might well have fatal consequences for the regime. A Communist state is highly vulnerable when in the throes of a major economic reconstruction, and for this reason many political commentators have regarded big programs of economic development in Communist countries as guarantees of peace. Their rulers, it is held, will want to avoid complications in foreign affairs when they have their hands full with internal problems. On the other hand, it is just when a Communist government is pressing hardest on its people that it has most need of an external enemy to stir up patriotic emotions and provide a pretext for discrediting opponents as agents of a foreign power.

During the period of the Soviet first Five-Year Plan, it was too dangerous for the Soviet Union, isolated as it then was, to pursue an aggressive policy or provoke external conflicts, but the myth of an impending imperialist attack was continually projected and was dramatized by means of the Ramzin and other show trials. Later in the 1930's, when Stalin was faced with a real menace from the expansionist policies of Germany and Japan, he made full use of it in framing the Old Bolsheviks. China today is in a happier position than Russia formerly was in that she can avail herself of Soviet protection if she gets into trouble by provocations in foreign policy. Indeed, this was clearly demonstrated in the Korean war, when Communist China was able to send an army to fight against the United Nations in the Korean peninsula without suffering any retaliation on her own territory because of Western concern that any widening of hostilities might involve war with Russia.

In precipitating the recent crisis over the offshore islands, it seems probable that Peiping counted on the anticipated reluctance of the United States' NATO allies to back a policy of defending the islands at the risk of war, so that there was a good possibility for Communist China, with Soviet backing, to confront an isolated America in a brink-of-war crisis. The deliberate manner in which the offensive against Quemoy was launched in the fourth week of August, less than a month after Khrushchev's visit to Peiping and just after the commencement of the nationwide propaganda drive for the establishment of the communes, indicates that it was a step planned very consciously and with a careful calculation of risks. The crisis was at once used to whip up patriotic enthusiasm and fresh hatred against America, to justify mobilization of the militia, and to commend the communes as pillars of national defense. A number of executions of alleged Kuomintang agents have also been announced, and while it must be assumed—as indeed the Nationalists themselves claim—that agents from Formosa have been penetrating the mainland, the nature of the Communist police and judiciary is such that the label of treason can be pinned on any individuals who resist the domestic policies of the regime.

typically named the "Overtake Britain People's Commune"—From *Jen-min jih-pao*, Aug. 18, 1958.

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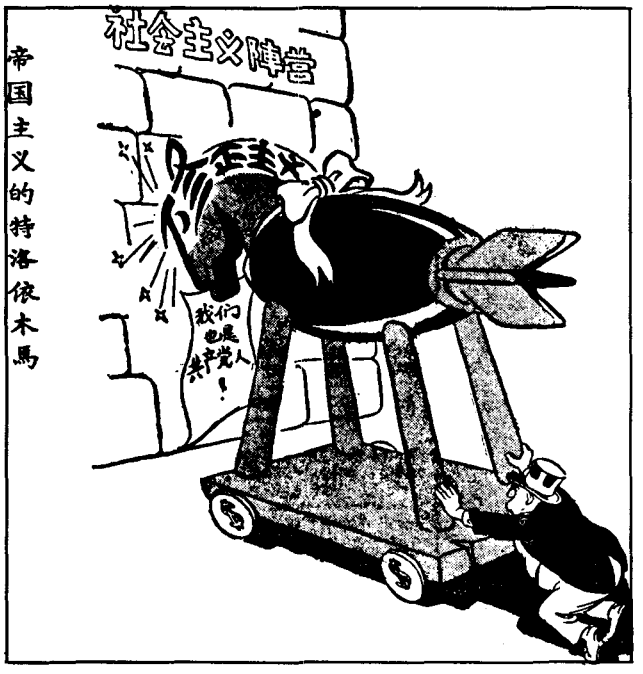
It is noteworthy in this connection that Chinese Communist propaganda systematically endeavors to deny the Nationalists any reality as a political force and to represent them simply as American puppets. The Chinese Communists always speak of the Americans as "occupying" Formosa and thus as having actually seized Chinese territory, not as merely protecting the residue of the former governing power in China. This line of propaganda not only keeps continually before the minds of the Chinese on the mainland the picture of America as an aggressive enemy always looking for an opportunity to strike at People's China, but also identifies the Nationalist regime with foreign domination. The fact is that the Nationalist government on Formosa represents a serious political threat to Peiping just because it *is* a Chinese government and administration on Chinese territory and not a mere aggregate of exiles in scattered foreign countries like the refugees from the Communist regimes of the Soviet Union, Poland or Hungary. The Nationalists maintain a state and an economy "in being" which offer a Chinese alternative to the Communist system, and the political attraction of this alternative is likely to increase in proportion to the aggravation of conditions on the mainland as the masses are made to suffer for the sake of high-speed industrialization and enforced collectivism. In deciding to step up the pressure of their revolution, therefore, it was a necessity for the Communist leaders to do something to discredit, humiliate, demoralize and, if possible, liquidate the Nationalist regime concurrently with "leaping progress" in the domestic field.



The Arch-Enemy—Revisionism

"Revisionism" is here branded as "the Trojan horse of imperialism," assaulting the walls of the "socialist camp." Sign in horse's mouth reads: "We are Communists too!"

—*From Jen-min jih-pao (Peiping), June 8, 1958*

It is still too early, at the time of writing, to discern how the Quemoy venture will finally turn out for the Communists. If their actual objective had been to effect the conquest of the offshore islands and inflict a humiliating military defeat upon Chiang Kai-shek, then it already seems clear that the venture will end in failure. If, however, as appears more likely, Peiping's objectives were less military than they were diplomatic and psychological, it must be acknowledged that the move has already achieved a limited but not insignificant measure of success. Diplomatically, it succeeded insofar as it placed the United States in a strained position between the other NATO powers on the one hand and Taipei on the other, though it did not succeed in pressuring Washington into a serious diplomatic retreat; psychologically, it has been effectively exploited on the Chinese Communist home front for the purposes earlier mentioned. Also, Peiping's advance calculation of risks seems substantiated thus far in that there has been no direct American military intervention beyond the convoying of Nationalist supply ships.

Peiping and Anti-Revisionism

A foreign policy of accentuated conflict with the strongest of the Western powers, however, involves reliance on the solidity of Communist China's military alliance with the Soviet Union and on the cohesion of the Communist bloc as a whole. Logically, therefore, it must be of special importance for Peiping to denounce and discredit any ideological tendencies in the Communist world which threaten that cohesion, and to oppose any inclinations on the part of the Soviet Union itself towards a relaxation of tension in its relations with the West. Hence the initiative taken by Communist China last May in launching the new campaign of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy against Tito. From the Chinese point of view, the unforgivable sin of Yugoslav communism was its neutralism in foreign policy, its ostentatious aloofness from the Warsaw Pact and impartial condemnation of military blocs, those among Communist states no less than those of the Western powers. On the score of domestic policy, Yugoslavia was far more respectable than Poland; Tito firmly maintained the single-party system and had shown by the imprisonment of Djilas that

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no fundamental criticism of Communist rule would be tolerated in Yugoslavia. But Yugoslav neutralism was a crying scandal, and if it were not vigorously denounced and condemned, it might influence other Communist countries. After all, the Hungarian insurgents, in demanding the withdrawal of Hungary from the Warsaw Pact in October 1956, had only followed the Yugoslav example.

However, Khrushchev, through his gamble of reconciliation with Tito in 1955, had so deeply committed himself personally to the hope of bringing Tito ultimately back into the Communist bloc that he was extremely reluctant to face the fact of permanent Yugoslav recalcitrance, as manifested in the party program submitted to the Ljubljana Congress in April of this year. It therefore fell to China to take the lead in the political onslaught against Tito, and the editorial in *Jen-min jih-pao* on May 5 was a clarion call to ideological warfare. Moscow followed it up, but with less asperity and with vacillations which suggested that even at the eleventh hour Khrushchev was still hoping for Tito's acceptance of some formula which could be represented as a recantation. There was no response, however, from Tito's side, and finally a line of blood was drawn between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and a stern warning given to all revisionists in Eastern Europe by the execution of Nagy and other leaders of the Hungarian revolt, who had left the asylum of the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest with a Soviet safe-conduct. There is no direct evidence that the Chinese Communists had anything to do with the executions, but the glee with which the news was announced in the Chinese press indicated that the action had the entire approval of the Peiping leadership.

THE CHINESE COMPULSION to strengthen the Communist bloc as a united power in world affairs did not stop at merely combatting tendencies towards neutralism; it extended to an endeavor to obtain formal recognition of the leadership of the Soviet Union in the common cause of communism. The need for such an avowal arose particularly from the attitude of Poland, where anti-Soviet feeling had produced an unwillingness not only to defer to Soviet "experience" in domestic matters but also to conform to Soviet requirements in matters of foreign policy. The Chinese Communist view was in agreement with that of the Poles on the right of each Communist state to frame its internal policy according to its special problems and conditions, but Peiping insisted that policies in the international field must be coordinated and that this could be done only by accepting the leadership of a single power, which had

A Chinese View of Tito

Caption on pillow: "Tito's socialism."
Caption on blanket: "American imperialism."

—*From Jen-min jih-pao (Peiping), July 4, 1958.*

to be the Soviet Union. At first sight it may seem strange to find China—which might be expected to be jealous, considering its great size, population and traditional pride, of any Soviet preeminence in the fraternity of Communist states—not merely failing to oppose, but even actively promoting, Moscow's supremacy. In part this may be regarded as a *quid pro quo* for the support which Peiping claimed from Moscow for its own purposes. But, more fundamentally, it appears to reflect the Chinese conception of the requirements of "proletarian internationalism"—a belief that the Communist bloc cannot be effective internationally unless it has a recognized controlling leadership, and that only the Soviet Union, with its great preponderance of industrial and military power, is capable of performing this function.

Mao Tse-tung, not unreasonably, saw a danger that too much Polish independence might bring dissension and disunity to the bloc in a time of crisis, and he considered that China's part was to help in persuading the Poles to accept a certain degree of subordination to Moscow in return for Mao's moral backing of Gomulka for that part of the latter's program which involved Poland's right to manage her internal affairs. Already when Chou En-lai

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visited Warsaw in January 1957, it was reported that he tried to get Gomulka to acknowledge Soviet international leadership in the joint communique they were to issue, but received the reply that the state of public feeling in Poland at that time made such a gesture out of the question.

Ten months later, when the leaders of the governing Communist parties of the world gathered in Moscow to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, the Chinese renewed their persuasion of the Poles and this time succeeded in inducing them to put their signature to the 12-party declaration which recognized the preeminent position of the Soviet Union at the same time that it denounced revisionism as the greatest current danger to the Communist cause. In Poland, the more liberal-minded of Gomulka's followers had earlier been enthusiastic about Mao's expositions of the "hundred flowers" principle and the methods of resolving contradictions among the people, and for a while there had been talk of a "Warsaw-Peiping axis" to check the domination of the Soviet Union in the Communist world. There was correspondingly bitter disappointment when China appeared to desert Poland and throw her weight on the side of Moscow.

The Iron Law: Party Supremacy

But the policies of the Chinese Communist leadership over the past three years should not be regarded as merely the result of a fickle opportunism. They have reflected rather an adaptation to facts which have been discovered to be different from what they were thought to be. Between the beginning of 1956 and the middle of 1957, the outlook of the ruling circles in Peiping, and particularly of Mao himself, was colored by an exaggerated optimism with regard to the popular support enjoyed by the Communist Party and the prospects of China's smooth and rapid achievement of large-scale industrialization on a socialist basis. From this Mao drew the conclusion that a milder and more relaxed policy could be pursued without in any way endangering the political supremacy of the party and the progress of socialist construction. There is no reason to doubt that he preferred to lighten the burden of the regime if he could, and that the events in Hungary confirmed him in his belief that the greatest danger for the party in China lay in the tendency to lose contact with the masses and become identified with an oppressive bureaucratic system. Hence his endeavors both to give more freedom of thought and criticism to the intelligentsia and to provide some scope for the expression of discontent among the people, even to the extent of tolerating strikes and minor disturbances which might represent harmless contradictions between the government and the governed. But always there was the reservation that the whole apparatus of repression and coercion must be called into play again if it should prove that the relaxation was endangering the foundations of the regime.

A change of policy back from soft to hard need not involve any reversal of principle, for the party always remained, in Mao's theory, the sole judge of whether criticisms of itself were permissible and whether any particular conflict was to be regarded as a non-antagonistic one "among the people" or as an antagonistic one "with the enemy." The party, indeed, must be the judge of how much violence or intolerance is needed in order to maintain its monopoly of power, and this is a matter of weighing the various elements and possibilities in a given concrete situation. The only fixed principles are those of maintaining the rule of the party and of building socialism.

The reaction in China, the turn from relaxation and indulgence to ferocious persecution and intransigence, has resulted from the discovery that Mao was not loved as much as he thought he was. Undoubtedly he wishes to be loved by his people, and it is always fatally easy for a dictator, who has dragooned a society by suppressing opposition and rigging elections, to believe in the reality of the universal praise and adulation that surround him. The shock is all the greater when an over-confident raising of the lid suddenly discloses the disaffection hitherto kept underground. But for a Marxist-Leninist who is convinced that history is on his side and that the mission of the proletarian vanguard cannot be affected by any blindness of the masses, the revelation of unpopularity cannot be a reason for the abandonment of power or a modification of social objectives, but only for the adoption of sterner measures and greater vigilance against the enemy. Any relaxation of Communist rule leads sooner or later to the point where the process either must dissolve the party dictatorship and inaugurate a genuine political liberty, or else must be reversed so that the crumbling monopoly of power may be restored. The more radical revisionists in Europe, such as Djilas and Kolakowski, are ready for the former alternative, but the Communist rulers everywhere have seen the danger signals and since the middle of 1957 have been endeavoring to tighten up once more the bonds of totalitarian control. The only difference in China is that the swing of the pendulum has been greater than anywhere else. Today the "hundred flowers" are dead and the Chinese Communists are advancing under a banner which might well bear the slogan, "Forward to Stalinism!"

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Indonesian Communism Under Aidit

By Justus M. van der Kroef

ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL factors behind the remarkable resurgence of Indonesian communism in recent years has unquestionably been the success of its present leadership in evolving a flexible ideological rationale equally well adapted to the tactical requirements of the complex, fast-changing Indonesian political environment and to the Communist bloc's current "general line" respecting the "underdeveloped" countries.[1] In large measure the ideas and theories embodied in this new approach are those of Dipa Nusantara Aidit, who has been the dominant figure in the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) since his assumption of the post of party secretary general in March 1954.

It should perhaps be stated at the outset that the author's use of the term "Aiditism" to denote the aggregate of these ideas is not intended to impute to them the stature of an original and different form of Communist doctrine, much less the inflexible quality usually associated with any "-ism." For Aiditism is actually not so much a clearly defined brand of "national" communism —though Aidit himself has on occasion seemed to veer close to making such a claim for it—as it is a perspicacious *ad hoc* adjustment of the PKI's policies and theoretical line to the often bewildering course of events in Indonesia in the last few years. This doctrinal elasticity does not appear to have cost Aidit any loss of approbation in Moscow, while it certainly has helped the PKI to recover almost completely from the disastrous consequences of its past tactical mistakes.

Historical Background

Aiditism's emphasis upon making communism understandable in terms of existing Indonesian social and economic realities stands out in particularly sharp contrast to the doctrinaire orientation of the PKI in the early years following its formation in 1920. The party's leaders in this period, R. Darsono and Semaun, sought to conform as closely as possible to Marxist-Leninist theory in making the Indonesian Communist movement exclusively an organ of the industrial proletariat and the peasantry, and in turning it against colonialism, capitalism (whether foreign or domestic), and the middle-class Indonesian Islamic renascence.[2] The result was that the party's base remained exceedingly narrow, for on the one hand the industrial proletariat was as yet insignificant, and on the other the party's doctrinaire appeal proved largely ineffectual in influencing the tradition-bound peasant population, except perhaps the Javanese landless proletariat.

As early as May 1925, in an address before the students of the University of the Peoples of the East in Moscow, Stalin assailed the inflexible strategy of the PKI leaders as a "left-wing deviation" which was preventing the

[1] For discussion of the internal political context which favored the resurgence of the PKI, see the author's "The Communist Movement in Indonesia," *Il Politico: Rivista de Scienze Politiche* (Pavia), Vol. 23 (1958), pp. 141-50; and "Indonesia's First National Election: A Sociological Analysis," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 16 (1957), pp. 413-17.

[2] No complete history of the PKI as yet exists. For the party's early history, see J. T. Petrus Blumberger, *De Communistische Beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie* (2nd rev. ed., H. D. Tjeenk Willink, Haarlem, 1935); for the influence of Indonesian communism in the 1930's, see J. M. Pluvier, *Overzicht van de Ontwikkeling der Nationalistische Beweging in Indonesie in de Jaren 1930 tot 1942* (W. van Hoeve, Bandung, The Hague, 1953).

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party from becoming more than a mere sect and was isolating it from the significant social movements in the country. This admonition went unheeded, however, and the party's essentially dilettantish character and lack of an organized following were plainly revealed by the complete failure of the revolutionary coups which it attempted in 1926-27, and which the Dutch colonial authorities suppressed with little difficulty. Outlawed because of its violent tactics, the party went into a steep decline. Although there were scattered attempts by underground PKI members to infiltrate left-wing nationalist groups during the 1930's, it was not until the end of World War II that the Communist movement in Indonesia once again sprang into life.

The chief lesson which the Indonesian Communists learned from the experience of the 1920's was that they must endeavor to win support from other socio-economic groups besides the proletariat by employing "national front" tactics. The first major effort along this line was launched, however, not by the ineffectual early postwar leadership of the PKI proper (revived in October 1945), but by a rival Communist leader, Tan Malaka. Though prominent during the 1920's both in the PKI and the Asian Communist movement generally, Tan Malaka had broken with Stalin and the Comintern in 1928 to pursue his own brand of "national communism," similar in essence to the later doctrines of Titoism but couched within the framework of a broad pan-Asian, anti-Western solidarity front. He returned to Java in 1944 with the aid of the Japanese and became the principal force in the postwar Indonesian Communist movement until the emergence of a stronger PKI leadership in 1946 with the return of the old-line Stalinist, Alimin Prawirodirdjo.[3] Hoping to wrest control of the Indonesian national revolution away from the Sukarno government, Tan Malaka in early 1946 organized a national front known as the *Persatuan Perdjuangan* (PP), or "Fighting Organization," which included all the existing major political parties.[4] The plan collapsed with Tan Malaka's arrest in March 1946 for plotting a counterrevolutionary coup against the government, but the PKI proper actively continued the national front policy, as for example in the formation in early 1948 of the *Front Demokrasi Rakjat* (FDR), or "People's Democratic Front", embracing the PKI and other radical parties, labor and youth organizations.

Aidit's Rise to Power

These background events have been noted because they influenced Aidit's subsequent theories and thus form an essential part of his own political biography.[5] Aidit himself was born in Sumatra in 1923, the son of a petty official in the colonial conservation service. Sent to Djakarta just before World War II to attend a commercial vocational school, he immediately became affiliated with left-wing nationalist youth groups and, after the start of the Japanese occupation, engaged in labor organizational activities. Sometime in 1943 he joined an "anti-fascist" youth group which was part of the Communist underground and which, the PKI now claims, was instrumental in mobilizing popular oinion in favor of the August 1945 declaration of Indonesian independence.

During the revolution against the Dutch, Aidit continued to be active in various Communist and national front organizations, especially among the workers, peasants and youth, and was briefly imprisoned by the Dutch late in 1945. Upon being released, he became one of the most skillful propagandists in the Agitprop section of the PKI Central Committee. In 1947, he was elected to the Central Committee itself, and later to the executive council of the People's Democratic Front. Thus, well before the occurrence of the disastrous Madiun uprising in September 1948, Aidit had already established himself as the principal figure among the younger group of Indonesian Communist leaders, which also included M. H. Lukman, Njoto, and Paris Pardede. In general, the thinking of this group was much more strongly colored by nationalism than was that of the older party leaders like Alimin and Muso, whose communism was more internationally-oriented by reason of their long exile abroad and their Comintern experience.

The abortive Madiun coup, which followed shortly after Muso's return from exile in Moscow to become top leader of the PKI, marked a short-lived reversion by the party to tactics of direct revolutionary action for the overthrow of the Sukarno government. Aidit's role in the coup, as indeed the roles of several other prominent members of the party leadership, is not known. It is clear,

[3] The best analysis of the Communist movement in this period is H. J. Alers, *Om Een Rode of Groene Merdeka: 10 Jaren Binnenlandsche Politiek Indonesie 1943-1953* (N. V. Uitgeverij De Pelgrim, Leyden, 1956), pp. 98-128. See also George McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, N. Y., 1952).

[4] Tan Malaka also organized a proletarian youth front and ideological training centers like the *Panti Pengetahuan Revolusioner* (Institute of Revolutionary Knowledge), where many of the PKI's present younger officials received their first cadre training.

[5] Details of Aidit's political career are based on an unpublished paper by Boyd Compton, of the Institute of Current World Affairs, and on data supplied the writer by the PKI Secretariat for Greater Djakarta.

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however, that soon afterwards he journeyed to Communist China and the Viet Minh Republic, thus escaping the Indonesian government's armed reprisals as well as the first wave of sharply hostile public reaction against the party resulting from the Madiun insurrection.[6]

Much impressed by the program and tactics of the Chinese Communist Party, Aidit returned to Indonesia in 1950 to find the PKI still discredited and demoralized. He at once directed his efforts toward reorganizing the party and, early in 1951, was reelected to the Politburo, also becoming the guiding force in the Agitprop department. By 1953, the PKI had reembarked upon a new phase of national front policy, becoming one of the major elements of the parliamentary coalition backing the newly-organized, strongly nationalist Sastroamijojo cabinet. At the Fifth National Congress of the PKI in March 1954, Aidit won the post of secretary general after a bitter factional struggle against the surviving old-line party leaders. The resurgence of the party under his leadership was reflected in the fact that its membership reached 1,800,000 by 1957 (compared to 4,000 in 1948), with many additional thousands of supporters in fellow-traveling veterans', youth, labor and peasant organizations.

After this brief sketch of the highlights of Aidit's political career, the essential aspects of his theoretical views will now be examined in the following pages under a number of main headings.[7]

Rejection of "Tan Ling-djieism"

"Tan Ling-djieism" is the rather elastic term under which Aidit has condemned various "deviationist" tendencies held by him to have been responsible for the PKI's past tactical errors, whether in the Madiun rebellion or in the party's pre- and post-Madiun national front endeavors. To understand the meaning of the attack on "Tan Ling-djieism"—which may well be viewed as the foundation stone of Aidit's political philosophy—it is necessary to recall briefly the role of Tan Ling-djie in the PKI.

An Indonesian of Chinese extraction and a radical Marxist, Tan Ling-djie had been the principal conduit of PKI influence in the Indonesian Socialist Party, of which he was one of the leaders, as well as a strong link in the various left-wing front organizations of the revolutionary period (1945-49). In 1948, after the Socialists split into two separate parties, one of the right wing and the other of the left-wing fellow travelers, he formally affiliated himself with the PKI, though continuing to organize new fronts.

This was the period which saw the PKI shift to an increasingly hostile policy in accord with the new Moscow line demanding active struggle against "right-wing nationalism," and which finally culminated in the Madiun rebellion. Tan Ling-djie was not directly involved in the Madiun affair; nevertheless, Aidit and the younger PKI leaders later came to regard him as its ideological architect, and they also assailed his policies in the subsequent critical period when Tan advocated establishing crypto-Communist organizations, such as a new radical socialist party, to carry on the Communist struggle under the prevailing conditions of strong popular disapproval of the PKI. Tan believed that, until public opinion became more favorable, it was better to keep the party small and inconspicuous, and to let its work be articulated by front groups.

Shortly after his return from Communist China in 1950, Aidit took issue with this policy. He maintained that socialist fronts were untrustworthy by their very nature, and instead he advocated a policy of aggressive reconstruction of the PKI, with heavy emphasis on ideological training and party discipline. It was not until 1953, however, that the aging and ineffectual Alimin, who still remained the ranking party leader though charged with partial responsibility for the Madiun disaster, consented to a formal attack on "Tan Ling-djieism," later stepping down himself as PKI secretary general in favor of Aidit. Tan was dropped from the Central Committee as a result of the attack, but he was never read out of the party and remained in sufficiently good standing to be one of its candidates in the 1955 elections to the Constituent Assembly.

Aidit has used Tan primarily as an example of "subjectivism", which caused the party to fall into both "right" and "left" deviations. Subjectivism refers to a personal interpretation of Communist theory impelled by tactical considerations of the moment. A "right" (some-

[6] The coup was actually initiated by lower-echelon PKI leaders at Madiun (East Java), who mobilized Communist-controlled troop units in the area and on September 18 proclaimed a revolutionary government. The action was evidently taken without the knowledge of the top party leaders, including Muso, Alimin and Tan Ling-djie, although Muso proceeded to Madiun on September 19 and thereafter assumed direction of the revolt. The uprising was completely suppressed by the end of November, costing the lives of Muso and other high-ranking members of the PKI leadership.

[7] This analysis is based on the following writings by Aidit: *A Short History of the Communist Party of Indonesia* (People's Publishing House, Ltd., New Delhi, 1955); *Aidit Accuses Madiun Affair: D. N. Aidit's Defense Plea at the Trial in the Djakarta State Court on February 24, 1955* (Jajasan Pembaruan, Djakarta, 1955); *Indonesian Society and the Indonesian Revolution* (Jajasan Pembaruan, Djakarta, 1958).

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times called "empirical") deviation consists in believing that a subjective course should be followed for such purposes as gaining allies from various heterogeneous groups, particularly from among the bourgeoisie. This apparently was Tan's principal error, but for good measure Aidit has also attributed "left" (or "dogmatic") deviations to him as well, principally in connection with the Madiun affair. The latter type has to do with keeping the base of the party too narrow and making it a small sect of doctrinaire ideologues who needlessly waste the party's strength in ill-considered ventures—exactly the criticism, it will be recalled, that Stalin directed at the PKI in 1925. It should be noted, however, that neither a "right" nor a "left" deviation is necessarily in error as a matter of tactics: it depends on the extent to which the party commits itself to either, on the freedom of action it retains, and above all on how successful the particular approach proves to be.

In criticizing "Tan Ling-djieism," Aidit was not merely rationalizing past party failures in time-honored Communist fashion, but also was stating the case for a new policy of ideological stiffening as the basis for reconstructing the party, and for placing less reliance henceforth on right-wing allies who, by virtue of their class origins, could never be wholly trusted. Even more, he was challenging the whole concept, which he saw implied in Tan's policies, that the PKI for the time being should remain a small group of dedicated followers, and that Communist doctrine should stay a conversation piece among party intellectuals instead of being actively and broadly propagated to become a mass ideology. Just the opposite was needed, in his opinion, to infuse new life and vigor into the party.

The Chinese Example

Another important aspect of Aidit's ideological thinking is his insistence that Indonesia's road to socialism must be shaped by Indonesian conditions, and in particular that the methods of the Chinese Communist revolution are not indiscriminately applicable in the Indonesian context. As M. H. Lukman, PKI deputy secretary general and Aidit's closest collaborator, emphasized at the 1958 party congress, the PKI is a national party addressing itself to specifically Indonesian needs. There can, therefore, be no uncritical emulation of the revolutionary tactics followed in other countries.

Aidit has been quite explicit in criticizing the earlier PKI leadership for thinking that Chinese Communist tactics of armed struggle could be successfully used in Indonesia. As he put it:

One of the basic mistakes of the party was that it tried only to find the similarities between the Chinese revolution and the Indonesian revolution, but did not try to discover the differences, did not notice the peculiar conditions of Indonesia.

In particular, Aidit emphasized, two elements which favored the Chinese Communists — natural conditions suited to guerrilla warfare and the presence of a powerful ally in the rear (the Soviet Union)—were lacking in Indonesia. The Indonesian situation required that guerrilla activity be combined with revolutionary activity by the urban proletariat, and the failure to do this was largely responsible for the Madiun fiasco.

Aidit nonetheless acknowledges that Indonesia's general condition does bear some resemblance to that of mainland China of a few years ago, notably in respect of the persistence of "survivals of feudalism" aligned with the "forces of imperialism." Hence, it is proper for the PKI to follow the Chinese Communist lead in endeavoring to form a "people's" front, composed of all "progressive" elements in the country, in order to overthrow the "yoke of imperialism." In other areas, too, as will be shown later, Aidit's personal debt to Chinese Communist theory is not inconsiderable. However, he emphasizes that giving the Indonesian Communist cadres "a better understanding of the conditions prevailing in Indonesian society, of the peculiarities and laws of the Indonesian revolution," remains the PKI's primary concern.

By cautioning against unintelligent attempts to imitate Chinese Communist methods, Aidit was able to achieve several purposes. It enabled him not only to rationalize further the PKI's Madiun failure, but also to stress the need for continued tactical flexibility, to depict the party in the "nationalist" light that would help make it attractive to other Indonesian groups, and finally to assuage accusations and suspicions that the PKI, spurred by Mao's successes, might enlist Chinese Communist intervention on behalf of its own revolutionary goals. (At least part of the explanation for the move against the Chinese-Indonesian Tan Ling-djie may have been Aidit's desire to make the party appear free of Chinese influence.)

Role of the Peasantry

Aidit's debt to Mao is strikingly evident in his emphasis on the vital role which the peasantry must play in PKI tactics. Winning followers in the countryside has always been a weak spot in the party's organizational methods. Even in the turbulent period of the national revolution and its aftermath, the forces making for the accelerated proletarization and disorganization of Indonesian rural society were rarely exploited effectively by

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the party. Today, in view of the disparities in land ownership and the growing numbers of landless peasants, especially in Java, Aidit is quite explicit as to the direction the PKI must take:

The Indonesian peasants, who comprise 70 percent of the population, are still in a position of slavery, living a poverty-stricken and backward life under the oppression of the landlords and usurers. . . . The non-participation of the peasants means the non-participation of the majority of the Indonesian people, and this is a very great weakness in our united national front. . . . Because of this, the primary task of the Communists is to draw the peasants into the united national front. This means that . . . the most immediate task of Indonesian Communists is to eliminate the survivals of feudalism, to develop the anti-feudal agrarian revolution, to confiscate the land of the landlords, and to give it free of charge to the peasants, in particular to the landless and poor peasants, as their own private property.

Possibly to forestall the charge that his emphasis on the role of the peasantry derives from Maoism and is therefore inconsistent with his warnings against following the Chinese Communist example, Aidit as well as other PKI spokesmen have stressed that the significance of the peasantry as an element in the Communist revolution had been propounded by Lenin well before Mao. In any event, the present PKI program, drafted in March 1954 under Aidit's direction, is heavily slanted towards the Indonesian peasantry, whose plight it attributes to the continuing presence of foreign estate and mining enterprises in Indonesia. Because "foreign capital" and "feudal lords" are "closely connected," the program demands confiscation without compensation of all lands belonging to both "foreign landlords . . . and Indonesian landlords," and the "free transfer and distribution of the land among the peasants, in the first place among the landless peasants and peasants with small arable plots." [8]

In his *Indonesian Society and the Indonesian Revolution,* published in 1958, Aidit divides the peasantry into three sub-classes: rich, middle, and poor. Although the rich peasants lease out part of their land or lend money and thus are "semi-feudal," they themselves generally participate in the laboring process to some degree and hence "can also help the struggle against imperialism." The middle peasants are still "independent economically" but nevertheless "suffer from the exploitation of the imperialists, the landlords and the bourgeoisie"; therefore, they can actively participate in the Communist revolution along with the poor peasants who either have insufficient land or no land at all. They must, however, be led by the proletariat, while for its own part, "the proletariat can only give leadership to the revolution if it has made a firm alliance with the middle and poor peasants."

Aidit's anxiety to win converts from the entire agrarian segment of Indonesian society is perhaps chiefly responsible for his pronounced leniency toward the rich peasants, who in fact come dangerously close to being the Indonesian equivalent of the old Chinese landlord class. This leniency is further underlined by Aidit's assurance that the rich peasants are to be "left alone" during the phase of Communist-led "People's Democratic Government," which the PKI envisages as the first stage of Indonesia's advance along the road to complete socialism. Article 15 of the party program states explicitly:

The lands and other property of the rich peasants do not come under confiscation; the lands and other property of the middle peasants will be protected by the government.

Relations with the Bourgeoisie

Two elements which make the question of relations with the bourgeoisie a complicated and, at the same time, vital one for Indonesian communism have been pointed out by Aidit in the statements that "Indonesia is a petty-bourgeois country . . . in which small-scale enterprise is still very widespread," and further, that "the majority of the members of the party are of bourgeois origin." This combination, he emphasizes, confronts the PKI with a dual danger: first, there may be a strong tendency to collaborate closely with petty-bourgeois groups and allow them to influence party policy; secondly and concomitantly, individual party members may fall victim to "subjectivist diseases." The solution to the problem, in Aidit's view, lies in a proper understanding of the internal structure of the bourgeoisie and of its class aspirations.

Aidit's analysis divides the Indonesian bourgeoisie into two groups: a so-called "comprador" group and the national bourgeoisie. The compradors, by his definition, are those Indonesians of professional or business occupations who "serve the interests of the big foreign capitalists," *i.e.,* merchants, industrialists, importers and financiers who are ancillaries of the foreign estate, mining, and commercial enterprises in the country. Aidit acknowledges that even the compradors can take part in the anti-imperialist struggle "in certain circumstances and within certain limits," but he emphasizes that their interests are basically opposed to those of the people, that their outlook is reactionary, and that they aim "at smashing the Communist Party." Therefore, as a class, they are a prin-

[8] *Programme of the Communist Party of Indonesia Adopted at the Fifth Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Indonesia in March, 1954* (Agitprop Department, Communist Party of Indonesia, Djakarta), pp. 4-6, especially articles 13 and 14 of the program.

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cipal target of the Communist revolution and must be done away with.

The national bourgeoisie, however, is a petty mercantile and professional class much smaller in its scale of operations. Its outlook is essentially ambivalent as a consequence of the fact that, on the one hand, it too is stifled by the feudal aristocratic structure linked with foreign capitalist enterprise and the compradors, while on the other it is often dependent upon, and has class ties with, the compradors.

Aidit points to this ambivalence of the national bourgeoisie as the reason why the PKI has had "two sets of experiences with them." Within certain limits the national bourgeoisie can and does participate in the revolution against imperialism, as for example in the "August revolution" (the declaration of Indonesian independence in August 1945), when the bourgeoisie joined with the workers and peasants to proclaim the end of Dutch colonialism. At other times, however, the national bourgeoisie turns against the proletariat and becomes the ally of the comprador class "in the counterrevolutionary camp." The prime examples of this conduct, according to Aidit, were the Madiun affair of 1948 and the mass arrests of Communists under the government of the anti-Communist Muslim Premier Sukiman in 1951. (Following Aidit's line of reasoning, one might suggest, as an even more recent instance, the action of the bourgeois elements in the Indonesian Nationalist Party, or PNI, to repudiate further collaboration with the PKI.)

Thus, argues Aidit, the party must always bear in mind that the national bourgeoisie "can vacillate and betray," and accordingly it must be circumspect in its national front policies. Under some circumstances, the national bourgeoisie can participate in a national front; in others, it cannot. But in any event "the wavering nature of this class is not fatal." Precisely because it is weak, it can be drawn to the left under Communist leadership. Aidit holds this to be especially true of the lower ranks of the national bourgeoisie in the cities. Not only this petty urban bourgeoisie, but handicraftsmen, fishermen and independent workers as well, can all be allies of the proletariat, although the party, to guard against the danger that some independent workers such as private doctors and lawyers may come under bourgeois influence, must devote special attention to carrying out propaganda activities among them. As for intellectuals and students, Aidit emphasizes that they do not constitute a separate class in society; their social position and outlook are determined by their family origins, living conditions, and political beliefs.

In general, then, Aidit views the position and outlook of the national bourgeoisie as conditioned by its existence in a socio-economy which still remains subject to the powerful influences of the feudal aristocratic past and of the foreign capitalists or "imperialists" in the country. He stresses that the party, in enlisting the aid of the national bourgeoisie, must endeavor to make plain to the members of this class that their interests—in terms of the overthrow of foreign capitalism and of feudalism at home—coincide with the interests of the peasantry and the proletariat. The PKI has, in fact, made the protection of the national bourgeoisie against imperialism an important

THE ESSENCE OF "AIDITISM"—ADAPTATION

In short, we must adapt our party to the new phase of the struggle against colonialism, to a rapidly developing revolutionary situation. Especially [we must] adapt the organs of the party leadership as a preliminary step towards adapting our whole party to the new situation. We are obliged to do this if we want to make our party able to direct the development of a more advanced situation, if we do not want to fall behind developments. . . .

We adapt the party to the development of the situation with the intention that there will be no mass question which is unanswered or unsolved by the party. . . . We must each ask and answer our own question as to whether we have adapted ourselves to the new situation. . . . Are we really solving the economic and social difficulties which are suffered by the masses at this time, especially [those] suffered by the mass of the workers, the peasants, and the poor of the cities? To what extent have we held fast to national unity by continuing to rely on the alliance of workers and peasants? Have we respectively done what the constitution of the party has entrusted us with, what we are obliged to do by the party three-year plan, what the party entrusts to us every day?

—From D. N. Aidit's General Report to the Sixth Plenary Session of the PKI Central Committee, March 31, 1958, published in Harian Rakjat *(Djakarta), April 3, 1958.*

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plank in the party platform,[9] hoping thereby to convince this segment of the population that it has nothing to fear and everything to gain from working with the PKI toward the establishment of a "People's Democratic Government."

The concept of the ambivalent nature of the national bourgeoisie has perhaps been more valuable to Aidit than any of his other theories for the purpose of explaining the Madiun affair. As previously mentioned, the public reaction against the PKI as a result of the coup was such that the leaders then controlling the party, particularly Tan Ling-djie, advocated in effect that the party remain dormant until opinion changed. On the contrary, Aidit's contention after his return to the leadership in 1950 was that, instead of running from its enemies, the party should aggressively carry the issue of the Madiun uprising into the enemy's own territory: that is to say, it should explain the coup as the result of "provocations" on the part of the reactionary forces hostile to the PKI, especially of Vice-President Mohammed Hatta and other politicians of the Masjumi (Muslim Federation) Party.

Aidit's opportunity to develop this line came in 1955 when he was charged in court with libel against Hatta by imputing to him responsibility for the Madiun affair and declaring that Hatta's hands and those of the Masjumi leaders, Sukiman and Natsir, "were covered with blood." In his published defense plea (see footnote 7) he presented a detailed analysis of events leading up to the insurrection, endeavoring to prove that the whole affair was really instigated by "reactionary bourgeois" elements in the Indonesian government, who were secretly trying to sell out to the "imperialists" (the Dutch). It was "quite impossible," Aidit declared, for the PKI to have actually plotted to carry out a *coup d'état* and set up a Soviet government at Madiun because "these two steps are contrary to Communist theory."

Indonesia's Path to Socialism

Aidit's clearly Maoist-oriented conception of the Indonesian path to socialism starts out from a basic recognition of the relative weakness of the Indonesian proletariat. Its strength is placed by Aidit at only about 6,000,000, or a total of 20,000,000 including all family members, out of an overall Indonesian population of 84,000,000. Thus, it is still small in comparison to the large peasant segment of the population, and its cultural level also is low as compared to that of "capitalist countries." Even so, because of its "very fine qualities", notably its understanding of organization and discipline and its readiness to join in collective action against imperialism, it represents the principal force behind the Indonesian revolution, and without it the revolution cannot succeed.

The relative weakness of the proletariat, says Aidit, means that it is absolutely necessary to build up a "revolutionary front", and this front, moreover, must conform to the peculiarities of Indonesia's class structure. On the latter point, he states:

Of the classes in society the peasants are the firmest and most reliable ally of the working class, the urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally, and the national bourgeoisie is an ally under certain circumstances and within certain limits: this is the fundamental law which has already been and is being proven in Indonesia's modern history.

Aidit further stresses that the revolutionary activity of the proletariat in conjunction with the other front groups must proceed along lines dictated by the particular conditions of contemporary Indonesian society. In Indonesia, as an agricultural land and former colony, the vestiges of traditional feudalism and of modern imperialism are still strong and ubiquitous. Consequently, the next step on the road of Indonesia's social transformation is "to complete the national revolution" against the Dutch and to eliminate the remnants of imperialism and feudalism from the socio-economy. All groups except the landlords and compradors but including the national bourgeoisie can help in this next phase. Specifically, this phase entails:

. . . the nationalization of all capital and enterprises of the imperialists, the compradors and other reactionaries, the division of the landlords' land free of charge to the peasants, and together with that, general protection of the enterprises of individual national capitalists while the rich peasants are left alone.

It is here that Aidit's debt to Mao Tse-tung becomes most conspicuously apparent. Like Mao in 1949, Aidit indicates that there will be *initial* Communist protection of the national bourgeoisie and the wealthier freeholding peasantry. Furthermore, this means that the next revolutionary stage for Indonesia will involve a government, not of the dictatorship of the proletariat, but of the "dictatorship of the people"—a "People's Democratic Government" in which the proletariat, the peasantry, and the national bourgeoisie can coexist harmoniously under the leadership of the Communist Party. Aidit, however, is quite explicit in stating that the stage of "People's Democratic Government" is a "period of transition to socialism and not a form of society in itself apart from socialism."

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 6. Article 20: "Protection of the national industry against the competition of foreign goods, introduction of protective customs. Development of the national industry and preparing the conditions for the industrialization of the country by utilizing all the forces and resources of the state."

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Thus, the first objective of the revolutionary front led by the Indonesian proletariat is to fulfill the "democratic revolution" which began with the revolution against the Dutch in 1945, but which has not been fully realized, according to Aidit, because the 1945 revolution came to be dominated by "the upper strata of the Indonesian bourgeoisie." Hence, he declared, "it is an honor and a source of pride for the proletariat" to have urged all along that the revolution be continued, "to have called on the Indonesian people not to stop half-way" but to carry the struggle to completion with the elimination of all "imperialist and landlord power on Indonesian soil."

Ideological Discipline

Only a Communist Party which has mastered Marxist-Leninist theory, Aidit insists, can give proper leadership to the working class and other elements of the masses, but if it does this and is not afraid of criticism and self-criticism, it will become "invincible." He attributes the weakness and ineffective action of the PKI in the 1920's precisely to the lack of thorough ideological training and self-criticism, and emphasizes that there must be great organizational efficiency in the party structure in order to assure that these aspects of its activity will be properly developed.

Since Aidit's return to Indonesia, the impact of his ideas in this regard has been reflected in a very great expansion of the PKI's program of indoctrinational training for party neophytes and "aspirant members" (the designation given to new applicants for membership), as well as among the front groups. As a result, "aspirants" nowadays can attain full-fledged membership in the party only after considerable preparation. Moreover, Aidit points to "great progress" in publishing and distributing translated editions of the classics of Communist literature, and it is significant to note the relative catholicity of the works that have been made available to the PKI membership. These include not only the standard works of Marx and Engels, but also such writings as Lenin's *Left Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder,* Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR,* and Mao Tse-tung's *On Practice*, all of which are studied along with Indonesian commentaries and original essays from the pens of Muso and Aidit himself. At the last national party conference, held at Djakarta from June 25 to July 3, 1958, it was further decided—possibly with a view to promoting greater understanding of the inner weaknesses of the national front policy—to include in the party's prescribed study and discussion materials Mao's famous 1957 dissertation, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People."

Concurrently with these indoctrinational efforts, organizational discipline has also been strengthened through the progressive build-up, since April 1951, of the party's hierarchial structure. Party conferences and executive units have been set up at all local government levels from the province down to the district, and definite provisions have been made for the formation of party cells in factories, offices, schools and so on.[10]

The ideological and hierarchical stiffening within the party has been accompanied by a conscious effort to heighten its sensitivity and responsiveness to events outside the country and to build up in the party ranks a deeper sense of world Communist solidarity. This has involved frequent expressions of solidarity not only with "progressive" or "people's democratic" movements elsewhere in the world, but also specifically with the nationalist currents running strong in other Asian as well as in African countries. Thus, the PKI has identified itself with Asian-African opposition to "imperialism" and with various "modernization" movements directed against the vestiges of native "feudalism" in these areas of the world. Aidit's approval of the 1955 Asian-African Conference at Bandung was one notable example, and there have been equally unmistakable manifestations of Indonesian Communist sympathy for the strivings of President Nasser of the United Arab Republic. At the same time, the PKI has attempted to fall in line with the Sukarno government's announced "active and independent foreign policy." It avoids making a fetish of its ideological and other ties with Moscow and Peiping; indeed, some of its actions seem calculated to make a show of the party's freedom from outside dictation, as for example the dispatch of a PKI observation team to Belgrade in April 1958 to attend the Congress of the Yugoslav Communist League, and the continued maintenance of officially cordial relations with Tito despite the furious Moscow-Peiping campaign against him.

* * *

A CRITIQUE of Aiditism, especially in terms of the dynamics of the Indonesian socio-economy, falls outside the limited scope of the present article. It is, however, necessary to stress that, at a time when the doctrine of "polycentric" communism and its attendant relaxation of ideological rigidity has once again lost favor in both Moscow and Peiping, the indoctrination of the PKI neophyte under Aiditism remains amazingly flexible and

[10] For details of the PKI's organization, see Indonesian Ministry of Information publication, *Kepartaian dan Parlementaria Indonesia* (Kementerian Penerangan, Djakarta, 1954) pp. 500-10.

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slanted toward the overriding issues of domestic Indonesian needs today. Under Aidit, the PKI has learned to ally itself with and capitalize on the Indonesian national revolution, and even the events of 1948 in Madiun have now been so reinterpreted as to become part and parcel of the Communists' "national effort." Other Indonesian parties may represent special religious or socio-economic class interests, but only the PKI, boasts Aidit, is "the party of all the people." [11]

To comprehend the wide range and intensity of the party's interest and participation in Indonesian public affairs today, one needs only to read Aidit's recommendations to the all-Indonesian National Conference on Reconstruction in December 1957, ranging from the establishment of a National Planning Council and measures to assist, and transform the role of, national businessmen, to "better coordination between the ministries" and more vigorous action to obtain the "liberation" of Western New Guinea from Dutch control;[12] or again, to hear him urge the emancipation of women and the realization of "equal rights with the creation of a new life";[13] or still again, to note the PKI Central Committee's exhortation last April for tighter cooperation between the armed forces and the people and the crushing of the chain of provincial military rebellions.[14]

An even more recent and significant example was the pressure exerted by the PKI on the Indonesian Constituent Assembly. This body, which began its task of drawing up a permanent constitution in 1956, attracted widespread public criticism because of its inefficient organization, the disinterested attitude of some of its members (reflected in frequent adjournments because of the lack of a quorum) and its general failure to produce meaningful results. Shrewdly capitalizing on the public's impatience, the PKI in August 1958 issued a sweeping criticism of the Assembly's working methods and demanded, in effect, that it be dissolved unless the situation were immediately remedied. Within a week a revision of its procedures was effected, and the Assembly reached its first major decisions on constitutional issues.[15]

This close attunement of PKI policies to shifting political currents and popular aspirations has undoubtedly been a major factor in the party's electoral successes—first in the 1955 national parliamentary elections, and particularly later in the 1957 provincial and district elections in Java and South Sumatra, which entitled the PKI to boast that it had become the strongest party on Java. The formidable rise of the party's strength, however, has called forth mounting political opposition. One of the most important indications of this was the decision of the present Djuanda cabinet, announced September 22, 1958, to postpone the next parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for September 1959, for a period of not more than one year. The cabinet's action, which has the evident backing of the Army high command, had been rumored for some time and in July had drawn a strenuous advance condemnation from the PKI national congress as "a violation of the people's fundamental rights."

While such moves might eventually have considerable impact upon the PKI's present tactical flexibility and national front orientation, it does not appear likely, for various reasons of party self-interest, that they will cause the PKI to shift in the near future to the tactics of a full-fledged opposition party. Thus, it seems certain that "Aiditism" will remain a potent force on the Indonesian political scene for some time to come.

[11] See Aidit interview in the PKI periodical *Bintang Merah* (Djakarta), Vol. 11, No. 4 (April 1955), pp. 121-2.

[12] *Review of Indonesia* (Monthly journal of the Secretariat of the PKI Central Committee, Djakarta), Vol. 4, No. 12 (December 1957), pp. 27-30.

[13] *Times of Indonesia* (Djakarta), May 28, 1958.

[14] *Indonesian Observer* (Djakarta), April 3, 1958.

[15] *Ibid.*, August 27, 28, and September 4, 1958.

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Marxism—Yesterday and Today

EDITORS' NOTE: Karl Marx's voluminous, wide-scoped and frequently contradictory writings offer up "a Marx for any circle one approaches," writes Bertram D. Wolfe in his article below. His remark underscores the intellectual controversy which has spanned more than half a century over what Marx himself meant by Marxism, to what extent his doctrine has been justly claimed—or falsely appropriated—as the foundation stone of twentieth-century communism, and finally, what Marxism (or neo-Marxism) is today.

The two essays below offer some provocative reflections on these issues. In the first, Mr. Wolfe—surveying the "shipwreck" of Marx's socio-economic predictions and prophecies—pictures current Marxism as a rescue operation aimed at salvaging the flotsam of so-called "Marxian method" on the one hand, "Marxian humanism" on the other, by a process of selective exegesis and rationalization. In the second article, Mr. George Lichtheim develops the challenging thesis that Marx—when judged in the context of the times and forces which shaped his thinking—emerges as less utopian and revolutionary, closer to his liberal contemporaries, and less deserving of the Leninist claim to his legacy, than is generally conceived or conceded. Future issues of *Problems of Communism* will continue this discussion of Marxist doctrine, and readers' comments are welcomed.

The Prophet and his Prophecies

By Bertram D. Wolfe

THE 110 YEARS SINCE the *Communist Manifesto* pronounced the "downfall of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat equally inevitable" have not dealt kindly with Marx's predictions. At wholesale and at retail they have failed to materialize. The very approach which claimed to make of sociology a "science" and lay bare "the law of motion" of industrial society has proved irrelevant.

Yet the other nineteenth-century social thinkers and social critics remain buried in the textbooks, while the name of Marx has become a household word. Some reject him without knowing his work; others accept him in equal ignorance. There are lands where no intellectual dares approach his specialty except under a protective umbrella of quotations from Marx and from those calling themselves Marxists. The rulers of one third of mankind have raised him to Founder of the Faith by which they claim to chart their course. In the new nations of Asia many invoke his name though they know little of his doctrine.

In the West a number of intellectuals continue to call themselves Marxists—and it is these who will chiefly concern us in the present article. At the same time, non-Marxists in the free world, if they study Marx's writings dispassionately—as dispassionately as men can read words so charged with passion—are likely to recognize in him a great moralist and stylist, and a seminal thinker whose insights can still fructify the social disciplines (let us not fall into Marx's error of calling

A recognized authority in the field of Communist studies, Mr. Wolfe is best-known for his Three Who Made a Revolution *(Dial Press, New York, 1948).*

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them sciences): history, sociology, economics, and political philosophy.

The practitioners of these disciplines are today a little shamefaced about the fact that man's values must form a constitutive part of his examination of his own activities. Were it not for this false shame, political philosophy would not now be so nearly in eclipse. And it, too, would be acknowledging a substantial debt to Marx and his fellow utopians for insights into that branch of political philosophy which may be called social criticism, and which concerns itself with the imperfections of any society-in-being as measured against its own potentialities and against man's flickering yet undying vision of the good life.

Oracle of Doom

More than a century ago, when Marx undertook to analyze industrial society and lay bare its "law of motion" and its destiny, he saw it heading towards immediate and total catastrophe. The cataclysm was mere days or weeks away. First it was to come with the next street skirmish. Then it was to come out of a war to be begun before the year was up. A little later, it was to come out of the next downswing of the business cycle ("the revolution remains as inevitable as the next crisis itself").

With a zeal, a fanfare and an explicitness that no fortuneteller would risk, Marx was forever climbing out on a limb of prophecy, and forever falling from the dead branch. No other serious thinker of the nineteenth century was so frequently, egregiously and totally wrong in his predictions.

Worse than the fate of his prophecies concerning wars, the fall of ministries, sovereigns, dynasties and regimes, was the fate of his general law. Industrial society, he held, was destined to transform itself with great speed, indeed was even then completing its transformation, into a society completely polarized and torn in two as though by mitosis, a tiny handful of huge exploiters at one pole, and an overwhelming mass of miserable, dehumanized and outraged proletarians at the other. Proletarian misery and dehumanization were to become absolute. All other classes would be ruined and disappear into the proletariat. The outraged and the injured, having lost their last stake in society and their last semblance of humanity, were to rise in their wrath, expropriate the handful of expropriators, burst the integument of existing society, and humanize all mankind. Today excluded from any stake in the nation, tomorrow the proletariat would "constitute itself the nation." That tomorrow was *tomorrow,* not some years or decades hence. (Even when Engels died in 1895 he still gave the old order "until the end of the century.")

The Communist Manifesto, which proclaimed the end of nationalism, was intended to serve as the program for the revolutions of 1848. But those revolutions proved to be the greatest explosion of national feeling that the world had known. Though the *Manifesto* had failed to touch the problem of German national unification, within a few weeks of its issuance Marx and Engels, being Germans, made the problem a central concern. Indeed, it was to remain a central concern for most of the rest of their lives, until "the old boy, Bismarck, did our work for us." [1]

The proletariat, which in 1848 already "had no country to defend," would still be found in 1914, and once more in 1939, defending their respective countries. Indeed, nationalism was to prove the one cause for which the millions were ready to fight and die: and in the course of the twentieth century, it would spread from Europe, which was its home, to Asia and Africa, where the nation had hitherto been unknown.

When barricades and street fighting did not end "the system" in 1948, Marx began to call for war. *Die Neue Rheinische Zeitung,* which he was then editing, became the most warlike paper in Europe, indeed, the most warlike in the whole history of European journalism. He called for war of the German people on Prussia, for war on all the German principalities, for war on Denmark, for war on Russia, for war simultaneously on Russia, Prussia, England and Denmark at once.[2]

Until three years before Marx's death in 1883, he and Engels continued to take sides zealously in every "capitalist" war, while Marx urged unceasingly on Germany and England and France that they declare war on Russia. But in the final decade of his life, he began to catch a glimpse of the fearful outlines of the holocaust that was to come in 1914. For his native land he felt that this would be "a 'defensive' war, not one of those newfangled 'localized' wars but a race war against the allied races of Slavs and Latins." He realized that its outcome would be uncertain; that the European civilization which he ambivalently loved and hated would be in ruins; that the nations would fight for their very lives and all the peoples would defend their countries. He lost his taste for war as an engine of progress. Three years before he

[1] The writer deals with this question in detail in an article on "Nationalism and Internationalism in Marx and Engels," to appear in the December 1958 issue of *The American Slavic and East European Review.*

[2] Such calls for war are to be found in the Marx/Engels *Gesamtausgabe* (hereafter called MEGA), 1/7, pp. 24, 30, 92, 354-55, 376.

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died, he wrote soberly to the Russian Narodnik, N. F. Danielson: "A European war I would consider a terrible misfortune."

Engels had time to develop this feeling further. The twelve years remaining to him after Marx's death he spent largely in activities that can only be described in Lenin's language as "social pacifism"—an earnest effort to use the international socialist movement to avert the calamity. At the same time, he drew up plans for universal military service in a "popular militia" with "professional officers' cadres," to make Germany better able to defend herself if her existence were thus threatened. He solemnly warned the French people that if they entered into an alliance with Russia for war on Germany, they would find the German socialists and workingmen rallying to the defense of their country. In 1891 he urged on Bebel that the Socialists in the Reichstag should vote for the military appropriations that year, since it looked as if war might be coming "next spring." So the last twelve years of his life were seriously dedicated to that "pacifism" and "defensism" which Lenin was to denounce in 1914 as "treason to Marxism."

Thus, by recognizing the error of some few of their positions and predictions, Marx and Engels became the first "revisionists." The orthodox take unction from this as a sign that the founders were "scientific" and "no dogmatists," although they are loathe to touch whatever Marx and Engels left untouched, or to allow, with Marx and Engels dead, that there are any authorized revisionists among the living.

The founders' revisions were not limited to war and nationalism, nor changes in the timetable of revolution. Thus in 1850 Marx had assured the proletariat that it was a senseless "utopia" to expect "the slightest improvement in its position *within* the bourgeois republic." But in the 1860's Marx began to hail the legal shortening of the working day as "a consequence of the pressure of society" and as "the victory of a principle, in which the political economy of the bourgeoisie has capitulated to the political economy of the working class, . . . as the result of a half century of civil war." If this makes us wonder what Marx can here mean by "civil war," our wonder is increased by his coming to recognize that in America, England and Holland (Engels later added France), "the social revolution" (which of course had to be a "revolution") might be achieved by peaceful democratic process, "barricades being unnecessary because there, if they but want to, the proletariat can win victory at the polls."

And after Marx's death, Engels, whose writings on philosophy had always been more extensive, more systematic, more explicit, and more "philosophical" as well as intellectually weaker than the aphorisms of Marx in that field, took it upon himself to admit in letters to disciples that Marx's and his economic reductivism had been one-sided and neglectful of the complexity and autonomy of institutions as well as of the realms of the spirit—but then he took refuge in the evasive device that "in the long run" the economic or the material factor was "decisive." [3]

Still the Apocalypse

Whatever the founders' reluctant revisions in the light of their experience with a recalcitrant and bewilderingly changing world, at the core of Marx's thinking and emotions there remained to the end an irreducible holistic and apocalyptic element.

Still he continued to think of industrial society in mythic Hegelian totalist terms as "the system." Still he persisted in believing that whatever defects he perceived were integral to the system and could not be removed defect by defect but only by scrapping the system and replacing it with another system. Still he was sure that he knew the limits beyond which the most rapidly changing world in the history of man could not further change without shattering the hypothetically rigid framework of society. Still he assigned to a particular class the mission of shattering that framework. Still he was sure that he could descry, and at no great distance, a day of wrath and doom. Still he was insistent that continuous alteration (reform) changed "essentially" nothing—except that it prepared the chosen class by giving it more leisure for comprehending its "mission," which was not the elimination of recognizable evils (reform) but sudden and total transformation (revolution).

Volume I of Capital, the only volume that Marx completed, is possessed by this contradiction. The book contains rich treasures of empirical material: historical sketches; studies of technology; analyses of the development of modern industry; statistical material; keen sociological observations. But great sections which derive from British Parliamentary Bluebooks testify eloquently to the awakening conscience of British society. A paean

[3] It is noteworthy that Marx used the terms "materialist conception of history" and "dialectical" but never spoke of "historical materialism" or "dialectical materialism." These were of Engels' coinage, and it was Engels who expounded them. Marx never espoused a positive ontology or epistemology, either. Moreover, when Engels wrote to him that he was intending to read the dialectic into nature, Marx answered cautiously and a bit ironically that he "did not want to venture any judgment" until he had had time "to reflect on the matter and to consult 'the authorities' " (letter of May 31, 1873). Though Marx lived ten years more the "judgment" never came.

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to the victory of the Ten Hours Bill and other social legislation tells the reader that the lot of the working class is improving; its power and organization growing stronger; its needs winning the support of all disinterested sections of society. "Capital is under compulsion from society." "The factory magnates have resigned themselves to the inevitable." "The power of resistance of capital has gradually weakened . . . the power of attack of the working class has grown with the number of its allies. . . . Hence the comparatively rapid advance since 1860."

This seems clear enough, and comforting. Then suddenly we run up against, at the volume's very end, the "conclusion" to all the empirical material: the general law or general line of the volume—"The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." Capital, we learn, came into the world conceived in original sin, "a congenital bloodstain on its cheek, dripping with blood and dirt from head to foot, from every pore." And it is destined now, by the workings of "the immanent laws of capitalist production itself," to leave the world in a cataclysm. One capitalist kills many. The other classes are being proletarianized, too.

Along with the constantly diminishing number of magnates of capital . . . grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation: but with this grows too the revolt of the working class. . . . The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production. Centralization of the means of production, and socialization of labor, at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

But was it for this that all the vast researches were undertaken and all the empirical material accumulated? This "conclusion" Marx had reached when he was just cracking the bindings on the first books of economics, back in 1844. The "general law" was up his sleeve before his concrete "investigation" began. Perhaps he supposed his message would seem more impressive surrounded by all the concrete material of his researches. But the material, far from bolstering, refutes the "general law!" The grand conclusion of *Capital* is but our old friend, the pre-economics prophecy of 1844—the prophecy of 1844—the prophecy of the imminent Apocalypse.

Marx's Betrayers—Man and History

In a sober moment, Marx had written: "No social order ever perishes before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed." This, alas, on examination, proves no more explicit than any other of Marx's sweeping generalizations. Nor any truer, as the Russian and Chinese Revolutions were to demonstrate. With singular perversity, history was to vouchsafe social revolutions in underdeveloped countries on the eve of industrialization, or only part way along the road, and was to deny them in the advanced industrial societies which Marx's law specifically dedicated to revolution.

Moreover, the industrial society Marx knew had by no means reached the end of its development in 1844—or in 1848 when he delivered the doom so stirringly, or in 1867 when he tacked it on to the empirical material that so largely contradicted it. Actually, the industrial society Marx knew was scarcely at the beginning of the development of its "productive forces."

The industrial revolution which Marx had studied—the change from manpower, animal, wind and waterpower, to steampower, and from cottage handicraft to machino-facture—was but the first industrial revolution. It was followed by a second—the age of electricity. And by a third, a fourth and a fifth—conveyor belt, combustion engine, synthetic chemistry, electronics, automation, atomic fission, atomic fusion. True this latest revolution does seem to make a cataclysm unpleasantly possible, but it is not Marx's cataclysm.

In place of the polarization Marx had predicted, the very opposite has occurred. The intermediate classes that were to have been proletarianized have greatly changed their character and vastly multiplied. The industrial proletariat has lost in numerical weight in the total population but has gained greatly in status, and in organized economic and political power. The service trades, which Marx contemptuously treated as sheer economic waste and as "parasitic servitors to the parasites," have increased steadily in number and variety, and in the advanced countries, have become servitors to the working population.

The state, too, has proved refractory. Supposed to be the "executive committee" of a numerically dwindling bourgeoisie, its democratization has made it ever more subject to the labor vote, farm vote, and the vote of the intermediate classes. Out of labor's influence on government, and out of the general, quite classless, pressure of society as a whole, there have come state regulation of economic life, legal limitation of hours, minimum wages, protection of health and conditions of labor, legalization of the right to organize, institutionalization of collective bargaining, and the whole sweep of security legislation.

More startling has been the emergence of a number of economic novelties which have made the abstractions of the nineteenth-century economists—Marx's as well as, let us say, Bastiat's—totally obsolete as modes of generalization and understanding. These include protectionism,

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currency manipulation, deficit spending, price floors and price ceilings, state-fostered cartellization in one land and anti-trust prosecution in another, and, in vast areas of the world, autarky. Whether these features are to be welcomed or feared, they have produced a world which makes the projections of Marx and his opponents alike irrelevant.

Unkindest cut of all, the worker himself has not consented to being increasingly proletarianized. He has displayed stubbornness, tirelessness, courage, skill, incapacity to recognize when he is licked, and the power to enlist the sympathy of the bulk of society, in fighting off this "prophectic assignment." "It isn't a question," Marx had written, "of what this or that proletarian, or even the entire proletariat, may for a time *imagine* to be its goal. It is a question of *what the proletariat is,* and what that *being* will historically force it to do."

But unlike the declassed intellectuals who offered them leadership, the workers themselves have never been attracted to the "mission" Marx set for them. They have had no stomach for being reduced to nought, the better to prepare themselves for becoming all. It is *against* this process that *their* "class struggle" has been directed. Against this they have used their numbers, their solidarity, their influence on other parts of society, even their competition with each other. To win the suffrage, to exert influence and control over governments, to legalize and contractualize improvements in their condition, to —in short, to become "something" in the world in which —in short, to become something in the world in which they have their "being," rather than "everything" in a world which existed only in the fantasy of the utopians (of which Marx was perhaps the greatest)—it is to these aims that they have rallied. And to these aims modern society as a whole has rallied also.

As Hendrik Brugmans, Rector of the Collège d'Europe, himself a dedicated socialist, has put it: "Those who 'being nought were to want to btcome all,' become something, and the whole scheme loses its tidy outlines." [4]

A "Science" and a Faith

The secret of Marxism's power to survive the shipwreck of all his prophecies lies in its inherently dual character.

On the one hand it claims to be a science. It claims to have made sciences out of history, sociology, economics, politics; to do for them what Darwin did for the biological sciences; indeed, to do even more—to explain the past, make clear the present, foresee and control the future. But so badly has a century of actual history dealt with these claims that in the western world where one is free to question, no Marxist intellectual now ventures to mediate between Marxism and the non-believer without a large measure of what the lawyers call "confession and avoidance." Indeed, when they are pressed, they are apt to discard one by one all the *results* arrived at by Marx's "method" and to insist only on the validity of the method. Thus we are confronted with a spectacle which would have astonished Bernstein and Kautsky alike: today all *orthodox* Marxists *in partibus infidelium* are at the same time revisionists—albeit reluctant ones.

If as a "science" Marxism has been stripped down to a "method" which has produced only invalid results, on the other hand, Marxism's staying powers lie in the fact that it is also an *ism.* There is no Lockeism, no Smithism, no Millism, no Weberism, no Duerckheimism, no Micheletism, Rankeism, or Gibbonism, but there *is* a Marxism. It is an ideology in the precise sense in which Marx used the term. It is a creed, which can be clung to by faith where the intellect questions and rebels. It is charged with emotion, cannot be shaken by the mere refutation of any number of detailed matters; it is maintained by rationalizations, gives ground yet resists; it is filled with the thunder of denunciation and sustained by a sense of righteousness and the assurance of prophecy.

In an age prepared for by nearly two thousand years of Christianity but in which the faith of millions had grown dim and the altar seemed to them vacant of its image, Marxism arose to offer a fresh vision of the Last Things, a new hope of Apocalypse: a day of wrath when the mighty should be humbled and the lowly exalted; a new thousand-year kingdom of justice and freedom and happiness on earth; a world where life would lose its uncertainties and cease to play unexpected tricks on men. History was to be given a new meaning, a new goal, and a new end in Time (the "end of pre-history" Marx called it). A new integral faith and providential certitude were to guide man's uncertain steps and faltering thoughts. The initiate were to be the new Elect, armed with both understanding and vision. And the "proletarian," the most lowly and humbled, becoming ever more abased and outraged and injured, was to be crucified, crowned first with thorns, then armed with the vengeful lightning, to become, not only for his own class but for all mankind, the new Redeemer. Then at last man would become as God, master of his own destiny, maker of his own future, conscious architect of his world. He would become if not omnipotent, at least omnicompetent: the very division of labor which had made possible the

[4] From his suggestive introduction to the brilliant critique of Marx by Milorad M. Drachkovitch, *De Karl Marx à Léon Blum,* Droz, Geneva, 1954, p. 10.

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modern world society was to be ended and man become whole.[5]

Thus Marxism attracts, as Henri de Man wrote of its attraction for him, because it seems "as certain as science, as integral as religion." Hebraic prophecy and Hebrew-Christian chiliastic expectations are fused with the worship of that Faustian demon of an earlier age which became the fashionable deity of nineteenth-century worship: Science. The two powerful cults reinforce each other; depending upon the audience addressed, the Marxists of our day lean more on one or on the other.

Yet it is hard to see what there is left of "science" in a method all of the prophecies of which have proved false and irrelevant. Surely it cannot be the three quotations, endlessly repeated, two from Engels and one from Marx, to the effect that their creed is no dogma but a guide to action, or that "I myself am no Marxist." A few reluctant revisions in the face of history's refutation can hardly be elevated into a simulacrum of the humble and tentative way in which real scientists advance the test hypotheses.

If there is anything "scientific" about Marxism beyond the endless invocation of the word, it lies in its critical and empirical observation of the society of Marx's day. But in this critique, Marx is in nowise superior to the other utopians who were his masters. Even the invocation of the magic word, science, was common coin when Marx, not yet a socialist, came to Paris to study their works. All of the utopians had the idea that they could make a "science" of their generous and value-charged criticism of the defects of existing society, along with their speculative dreams of the perfect society.

Saint-Simon called his critique and vision "the science of universal gravitation." He wrote when Newton was still lord of scientific thought and gravitation its archetype. By the time Engels got around to making the same claim for Marx, Newton had just been dispossessed from the zenith by Darwin and gravitation by evolution.

Fourier called his critique and vision "the certain science." Proudhon called his plans for the construction of the future perfect society and his critique of the existing order "scientific socialism." And Marx and Engels, before they quarreled with Proudhon and expropriated the term, were proud of this self-taught workingman and pleased to recognize in him "the founder of the science of national economy."

What distinguished Marx from the other utopians was a canny refusal to be detailed about his utopia. But this was only true of his later writings. Now that history has made mincemeat of Marx's specific predictions and general "law of motion," the neo-Marxists of our day tend to take refuge in the more generous vision of some of his earliest work, much of it only recently published. However, in these early writings Marx is as visionary as any other utopian.

Flotsam from the Shipwreck

Today all neo-Marxists who must speak to those who are intellectually free are engaged in an enormous rescue operation. One branch seeks to rescue Marx's abstract model of the economy from the ravages of time; the other flees from the shipwrecked galleon of economic prophecy to the blessed isle of Marx's earlier utopian visions. The watchword of the one school is "Marx's method"; of the other, "Marx's humanism."

In Marx's works there is a Marx for any circle one approaches, for every changing fashion and mood. One has only to pick and choose. His writings are sporadic and frequently self-contradictory rather than systematic; at the same time he is an aphoristic writer and at his best a great stylist, dealing with matters of deep human concern. Thus his utterances have an appeal and a resonance, reverberating in such fashion that a few of them may be made to go a great way. It is fatally easy to find a minuscule body of quotations and enlarge them by repetition, contemplation and exegesis. Chipping thus a fragment from a huge and roughhewn figure the neo-Marxist proclaims: "Behold my Marx!" or "Behold the real Marx!"

The word "humanist" is tricky. Marx was at his most horrendous in 1844-1850; as he grew older, he became more humane and less in love with "terror" and "popular excesses." Yet there are more quotes for the "humanist" in the earlier writings. The trouble with those who would make of him a "humanist" or an "existentialist" in line with fashions of our day is that the tiny splinters they take are almost all from his earliest writings, things he set down before he was fully formed and had become

[5] "In the Communist society," Marx wrote, "where everyone has no exclusive circle of activity but can train himself in any branch he wants to, society regulates general production, and just by that makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow: to hunt mornings, fish afternoons, raise cattle evenings, criticize after dinner, in whatever way I please, without ever having to become a fisherman, a herdsman, or a critic." MEGA, I/5, p. 22.

It remained for Herbert Marcuse, a philosophical disciple of Hegel, Heidegger, and Marx, to add the final "existentialist" touch to the wonders of this utopia by suggesting that the change in the forms of ownership and regulation of industry would lead to "living without anxiety." (Introduction by Herbert Marcuse to Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, Bookman Associates, Inc., New York, 1958, p. 10.)

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the "economist" and "scientist" which was his pride and major claim. Always the same handful of quotations is offered, striking aphorisms culled from an enormous amount of nonsense and scorn and spite. Always there are the passages on *Entfremdung* ("alienation"), a term Marx derived from Hegel and sometimes used ironically "to make myself intelligible to the philosophers."[6] To this is added a single, important concept from *Capital*, the concept of "fetishism."[7] The whole "humanist" Marx could be printed in a single magazine article, but—with the exception of the truly important concept of fetishism—most of Marx's strengths and his weaknesses would alike be missing.

An honorable exception must be made of Maximilien Rubel, author of *Karl Marx: Essai de Biographie Intellectuelle*.[8] He is the most attractive and the most learned of the neo-Marxist "humanists." He at least does not work with a handful of quotations out of context, but is a Marxicologist in the great tradition of Mehring and Ryazanov. He has pored over everything Marx has written—more than the two aforementioned Marxicologists, for some new manuscripts of the early period have only recently come to light. With the exception of the Marx who worshipped terror and war, and the unpleasant Marx, revealed in so many of his letters, with their envy, mockery and injustice towards some of those closest to him—Rubel has taken all aspects of Marx's writings into account. But he rescues Marx from himself by the simple device of refusing to believe Marx meant his arrogant, cocksure prophecies, his claims to foreknow the "inevitable" future, his pretensions to have made of the social disciplines exact sciences on the order of natural sciences.

Rubel's Marx is simply a great moralist *(éthicien)* and a great social critic, who has pondered deeply the defects of existing society, and the *possibilities*, not inevitabilities, of a better one. His Marx modestly tells the proletariat and mankind as a whole what they "inevitably" must do, *if* they want—as he has faith that they "inevitably" must want—that "better society" which is his vision. Thus Marx is put back among the utopians, whom his pretensions to "science" taught him and Engels to patronize and scorn. The only trouble with this Marx is that it is the attractive and engaging Maximilien Rubel written large, and supplied with a great bush of beard, and not at all the Marx of the dogmas, quarrels, hatreds, envies, pretensions and prophecies.

Deviations and Detours

For the other branch of neo-Marxists who would cling to Marx the economist and scientist, the rescue operation consists of efforts to explain, or explain away, the treacherous behavior of actual economic developments by treating each novelty of history as a "deviation" from the "essential" and the "lawful" and the "predestined in the long run." An effort is made to show that though there may be shoals, or even dry land, or mountain peaks, where there was supposed to be deep water, still the course the great pilot set was "essentially" right. "Sly history's" novelties do not make the old sea-chart useless, they merely represent long and "explainable," if unexpected, detours. Herbert Luthy writes of this process:

> **When a theory shows itself incapable of explaining or even describing reality, its believers set themselves to writing books where they explain why the theory remains sound at bottom all the same, and wherein reality has erred. Thus it is that pre-Keplerian astronomy hardened into an impenetrable thicket of auxiliary hypotheses minutely elaborated, tables of deviations, squarings of the circle, with the sole purpose of making room for the re-entry of the incompatible results of new observations into the established system of geocentric astronomy or into the circular orbits of Copernicus.**[9]

The theoretical economists of the nineteenth century, and Marx who was their disciple and their critic, worked with an abstract model of the economy which—in part deliberately and in part unconsciously—abstracted from such "aberrations" as state intervention and regulation, state fostering and restraining, nationalization, protectionism, currency manipulations, the influence of organized groups, legislated cartellization and legislated competition, and the embryonic germs of the welfare state and

[6] Marx had the crass notion that man's feeling that the universe is alien to him, his purposes and his existence in it, arises from the forms of ownership of property. Hence he insisted that if "society" (which, especially when there is centralized administration and planning, can only mean an omnipotent state) takes control and ownership of property, the problem of alienation will thereby be solved. The writer doubts that any existentialist, or indeed any thoughtful philosophical mind pondering man's relation to a universe he has not made and can only slightly alter, is likely to accept this "materialist" reductivist view of alienation. Indeed recent history strongly suggests that where the state owns *everything* alienation tends to become total.

[7] The concept of "fetishism" was not original with Marx. He borrowed it from the classical economists, but gave it a rich and original development of his own. What he and they meant by it was a tendency to see the social relationships between men as if they were merely relationships between things, *i.e.*, the relationship of their products when exchanged with each other, and of men with machines.

[8] Marcel Rivière et Cie, Paris, 1957.

[9] Herbert Luthy, "L'Histoire du Monde: Une Déviation?", *Preuves*, Paris, May 1958, pp. 67-78.

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autarky. Theirs was a world of autonomous economic forces, with free movement of men, money, goods and ideas. The intervention of all these extra-economic forces was treated as negligible, or—to the extent they had been evident in earlier forms of state regulation—as having entered into a permanent decline with the end of mercantilism. This abstract model was still a useful conceptual instrument for approaching the world of the first half of the nineteenth century. But with the manifest decline of *laissez faire,* theoretical economics itself went into eclipse, since reality departed farther and farther from the models based on the "free" working of economic forces. Then came the age of the epigones, exegetes and fragmentalists—men who worked on some fragmentary aspect such as statistical series, currency and budgetary manipulation, or the like. It was not only Marxism that was painfully lacking in original thinkers after the death of Marx.

Even when Marx was writing his *Capital* it was already evident that public powers and organized groups were intervening in the "raw" or "autonomous" economic processes with ever greater scope and rigor, to regulate their consequences and alter their direction. If these efforts at regulation had, as they often did, consequences that were unintended, the "autonomy" of the economic process was nevertheless at an end. Whether *laissez faire* is regarded as a blessing insuring "eternal harmonies," or a curse on industrial society leading it straight to the jungle of civil war, the abstract model which was a useful and not too far-fetched conceptual fiction when Marx's masters were writing, had already become useless and increasingly misleading when he began his *Capital.*

In justice to Marx, perhaps it may be noted that the first of the three volumes of *Capital,* the only one he himself completed, is but a fragment of his intended work. As he originally outlined the work it was to consist of six parts: (1) Capital; (2) Landed Property; (3) Wage Labor; (4) The State; (5) Foreign Trade; (6) The World Market. Though Engels threw some portions of manuscript intended for the later sections into Volume III, actually all three volumes are but an expansion of the first section of the projected study. Particularly section 4, on "The State," was never reached by Marx at all.[10]

Thus it is possible to imagine that if Marx had gotten around to his volume on "The State," an empirical study of its functioning might have made him recognize its growing role not only as a regulator of the conditions of labor but of the economy as a whole. However, with the exception of his remarks on English labor laws, there is little in his occasional *obiter dicta* and aphorisms on the state which would lead us to believe that he might so drastically have revised his outlook and his method.[11]

Hence "orthodox" neo-Marxism has gotten farther and farther from reality, and has limited itself to expounding his doctrine as he left it—or, to cite Luthy once more, "to making an exegesis of the history of the world insofar as it is a history of the deviations from the Marxist schema."

As Hayek and Roeppke have sought to keep alive the vanished dream of the eternal harmonies of Bastiat, so Hilferding, Luxemburg, Lenin, Bukharin and Sternberg have sought to keep alive the eternal disharmonies of the essentially identical dreamworld of Marx. The epigones of the one school and the other still continue to feel at home in this world of abstract schemata, for only there can they theorize freely, in happy disregard of both historical survivals and historical novelties, of all the extra-economic and non-economic factors that make the real world so complex, so unmanageable, so resistant and unpredictable. Actually, both schools live in a lost world, for what the later nineteenth century witnessed and the twentieth century has enormously accelerated, is the total breakdown of the usefulness of the concept of autonomous economic laws, and the total shipwreck of all the predictions that Marx derived from the assumption of their autonomy.

[10] For an analysis of this point see Maximilien Rubel, *Karl Marx . . .*, p. 333. For Marx's own statement of his plan see *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie,* Berlin, 1953, pp. 29, 39, and 175; *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie,* Berlin, Eighth Edition, 1921, pp. XLVI and LIII; Marx's letter to Lasalle, Feb. 22, 1858, and his letter to Engels, April 2, 1858. When Marx was old and ill and had only two more years to live, Kautsky asked him about arrangements for the publication of his *Complete Works,* to which he responded sadly: "Those works—they will have to be written first."

[11] The writer has in mind not so much his childishly simple conception of the modern state as "the executive committee of the capitalist class," as his "philosophical" insurance against stumbling on the truth. He not only treated the economy as "autonomous"; he held that it was determinative. It was the state that was not and could not be autonomous, but was determined as to form and function by the economy. From his first admonition to the Young Hegelians that "the state does not have primacy over private property but private property has power over the state" (*MEGA,* I/1, p. 498.) to Engels last protective retreat to the imprecise and evasive "in the long run," neither Marx nor Engels ever abandoned the view that the economy determines the nature and functions of the state.

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Marxist Doctrine in Perspective

By George Lichtheim

THE PRINCIPAL DIFFICULTY in dealing with Marxism is that it is both a theory and a movement. As a theory it calls for the kind of critical detachment with which it is customary to approach theoretical constructs whatever their subject-matter; as a movement it evokes loyalties and passions which cut across mere theorizing, and more important it demands an *historical* approach.

The significance of the latter point appears more clearly when one contrasts Marxism with Darwinism (incidentally a practice inaugurated by Engels). Darwin and Marx can with some justice be bracketed as Great Victorians who did much to shatter the Victorian frame of mind; but although the theory of evolution has had its own history since it was formulated, Darwinism never became a "movement," while what is called "social Darwinism" (*i.e.,* the more or less legitimate confusion of Darwinian and Malthusian concepts in relation to the social world) is best regarded as a passing intellectual fashion.

There is not, that is to say, any compelling reason for discussing Darwinian (or for that matter Freudian) doctrine in terms of contemporary history. Neither the original formulation of the theory, nor its subsequent modification under the stress of criticism and experience, require more than a passing glance at the socio-historical matrix out of which this particular form of thinking arose. This is not to deny the importance and fascination of biography, for we cannot know enough about the thinkers who have shaped our intellectual world. But biography, even at its fullest and most extensive, is not to be confused with *Geistesgeschichte*; its subject is the individual, not the passage of the historical process through the medium of the uniquely determined personality.

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The introduction of such quasi-Hegelian termini no doubt indicates a kind of methodological *parti pris,* and indeed it must be conceded at the outset that the standpoint from which it is proposed here to review the development of Marxism is itself historical, *i.e.,* directed toward an understanding of the subject-matter as a phenomenon whose meaning cannot be grasped apart from its unfolding in history. Marxism is not to be conceived *either* as a set of formulas *or* as the ideology of a movement, but as the interaction between a certain theory and a certain practice.

Once this is accepted, various pseudo-problems fall by the wayside, *e.g.,* the question of "what Marx really meant." For if it can be shown that in "meaning" different things at different times (and contradicting himself in the process) he was nonetheless consistent in struggling with a particular set of (theoretical and practical) problems, it becomes unnecessary to try to divide the orthodox sheep from the heretical goats. Orthodoxy and heresy both have their roots in the mind of the revolutionary theorist who in 1848 stood for a species of Jacobin dictatorship, and a generation later had become the patron saint of West European social democracy. As in politics, so in philosophy: th eyoung Hegelian of the Berlin salons, and the aging positivist in the British Museum reading-room, represent different terms of an intellectual development which in its totality nonetheless discloses a remarkable cohesion—as did nineteenth-century culture in general.

If the subject is approached in this manner, it becomes easier to account for the discrepancy between the current status of Marxism as a doctrine and the political influence wielded by the movement which has appropriated its symbols. The existence of such a gap has been evident since the sterilization of Soviet Marxism in the 1930's, and possibly even before that date.[1] The point at issue in this particular context is the theoretical status of

[1] See Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism, A Critical Analysis,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1958, *passim.*

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"Marxism-Leninism," *i.e.,* the Leninist version of Marxism which has become official doctrine in the USSR. This question involves a proper appreciation of the role played by Marxism in Central European history since 1848, and of the imprint which the 1848 and 1918 revolutions left on Marxist theory. If this interrelation is not always clearly perceived, the cause lies in the political collapse of Central Europe during and after World War II. In 1918 it was perfectly obvious that the socio-political cleavage between Russia and Central Europe corresponded to the emerging split between Russian communism and Central European (then largely German) social democracy. The political situation in 1945-8 was very different, but the old cultural cleavage was still sufficiently powerful to give rise, after a few years of complete exhaustion, to the current struggle between "orthodox" and heretical (*i.e.,* autonomous) tendencies within the Communist parties themselves (and this although the Jewish intelligentsia and the Jewish labor movement could no longer be counted on to lend support to such un-Russian phenomena as Trotskyism, Luxemburgism, or Austro-Marxism—not to mention Menshevism, which in its origins and in its subsequent development can hardly be understood save in relation to the role played by westernizing Jewish intellectuals in the Russian revolutionary movement).

The Time and Place Context

The starting-point for any serious consideration of Marxism as a "system" (which Marx never intended it to be) is the recognition of its *historical* locus. In the words of one of the few serious writers on the subject:

> **Marx is best understood as a classically rooted western European who functioned in a time when his area was the center of the whole world in a far greater degree than it is now; when Great Britain was the economic and political model; when France was a reliable catalyst of revolution; and when a predominantly agrarian society was emerging into the phase of early industrialism.**[2]

Although this succinct statement omits to stress the Central European context, it does give due weight to the role which French political, and English economic thinking played for Marx, as indeed for almost all his German contemporaries. France as the laboratory of revolution, and England as the cradle of the modern world—these overwhelming realities had impressed themselves upon the minds of the generation which in 1848 confronted a dramatic political test. It has been said of Marx that to the end of his life he always remained the man of 1848; but the same can be said of his contemporaries, including Bismarck. For all of them 1848 was the moment of decision when the distinctively modern age impinged with shattering violence upon the world in which they had grown up.

What is at issue here is *German* thinking, *German* political experience, the first great upheaval of modern *German* society. A British writer, Mr. John Plamenatz, has remarked, a little unkindly, that in turning from the German to the Russian Marxists "we leave the horses and come to the mules." Insofar as this judgment is true, it reflects a circumstance of which the early Russian Marxists were painfully aware, namely their dependence on the more advanced political thinking which reached them from Germany. It is a fact of the first importance that the Russian radicals in the 1880's and 1890's turned to Marx and away from their earlier infatuation with French socialism; but to realize the significance of this event it has to be added that the French were simultaneously doing the same! Proudhon was not more discredited in Petersburg than in Paris, where his remaining disciples had to account for the failure of the Commune of 1871. Marxism triumphed in the French as well as in the Russian socialist movement (though not across the Channel) for roughly the reason that German academic scholarship was then being introduced in American universities, or German research methods in the British chemical industry (not to mention the introduction of Prussian military drill in Japan). For Germany was then nearing the pinnacle of her powers and prestige, and behind this sudden rise to world status there lay that sudden expansion of the national mind on which the Germans have lived ever since. In progress since the second half of the eighteenth century, this belated cultural renaissance—the first true intellectual awakening to reach the country since the Reformation—for a while gave the Germans a head start in almost every domain. What happened when the impetus had exhausted itself is another story. Here the point is that Marxism came in just when this national expansion was nearing its zenith, between 1848 and 1918; indeed it was an important part of it. If Russian and Chinese students are today brought up on Hegel and Feuerbach (however absurdly interpreted by doctrinaire and often barely literate schoolmasters), the reason is that there was a brief moment in European intellectual history when Germany headed the procession. If England has been responsible for the westernization of India and much of Southeast Asia,

[2] Solomon F. Bloom, "Man of his Century: A Reconsideration of the Historical Significance of Karl Marx," *The Journal of Political Economy,* New York, Vol. LI, No. 6, December 1943.

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Germany may in the long perspective appear to have performed a similar service for China—not that anyone ever plans these results beforehand.

The Blind Spots of Current Debate

Such reflections are not irrelevant to a consideration of Marx's theoretical heritage. On the contrary, they take one straight to the heart of the current controversy over Marxism as a body of doctrine. The trouble is that the argument tends to be conducted (on all sides) in the manner of medieval scholasticism. Texts are cited to confirm antecedent positions which would not be one whit affected if the evidence were read differently. Astonishment is voiced at the apparent invulnerability of a body of thought which today appears at best old-fashioned, and in some respects incompatible with modern scholarship. Again and again it is pointed out that Marxism is a nineteenth-century doctrine, as though the same were not true of liberalism; that Marx had mid-Victorian England in mind when he wrote (what about Mill?); that his theories are not applicable to modern industrial societies (it used to be maintained that they made no sense in agrarian countries, but the Bolsheviks thought otherwise); that dialectical materialism represents an unstable compound of philosophy and science (is it therefore inferior to pragmatism?); that the labor theory of value is useless as a tool of economic analysis (it may however be important to economic sociology); and finally that the class struggle is a myth.

Some of the more fashionable utterances on this well-worn subject serve merely to display a degree of misplaced polemical zeal on the part of their authors, *e.g.*, the frequently heard complaint about Marx's warmongering in 1848-49—a trait he shared with all the German radicals of his day, not to mention the French republicans under Napoleon III, the Italian liberals of the Cavour-Mazzini period, or the Polish nationalists, who were the greatest warmongers of all! Other strictures betray a curious lack of historical sense—for example, the assertion that the frequent talk of imminent revolution in the Marx-Engels correspondence suggests that the fathers of German social democracy believed the socialist world revolution to be around the corner. An unbiased study of the evidence (including both their correspondence and their published writings) discloses that "the revolution" to which they constantly referred was the European democratic uprising against the old regime—a movement which had been aborted in 1848, stayed underground after 1871, and finally broke through in 1918. In this respect, at any rate, they proved better prophets than the majority of their contemporaries. For the rest, the labor movement was assigned the task of exploiting the democratic revolution to advance its own aims. It is true that the *Communist Manifesto* makes a sweeping attempt to telescope democracy and "proletarian revolution"; but then the *Manifesto* was published a few months before the failure of the June 1848 rising in Paris disclosed the political immaturity of the working class in the most advanced country of continental Europe. The effect on Marx was profound; it is not too much to say that after 1848-49 he became what is nowadays called an ex-Communist. At any rate, he and Engels helped to bring the democratic labor movement into being, and even the Paris Commune of 1871 did not seriously dislodge them from the theoretical and practical position of their middle years. That the residual ambiguities in Marx's thought were subsequently utilized by Lenin to justify his own strategy is a different matter.[3]

The current academic fashion is to distinguish between orthodox Marxism (supposedly represented by Russian communism) and various forms of quasi-liberal "revisionism," starting with Eduard Bernstein. This curious manner of approaching the subject ignores the fact that Bernstein regarded himself (and was regarded by others) as a Marxist, though a somewhat unusual one, and that the real "revision" was subsequently introduced by Lenin, when he substituted the centralized vanguard of "professional revolutionaries" for the political self-determination of organized labor. It also ignores the important fact that some of Bernstein's subsequent heresies have their source in Engels,[4] who must be regarded as the real founder of German social democracy and of social democratic orthodoxy as it existed between the death of Marx (1883) and the revolutionary upheaval of 1917-18.

Lastly, the proponents of this viewpoint seem to have forgotten Lassalle (1825-64), who has a much better claim than Bernstein to represent a non-Marxian form of socialism. A Ricardian socialist in his economics, an old-fashioned idealist Hegelian in philosophy, and an unashamed nationalist in politics, Lassalle stood for a synthesis of patriotism and radicalism which was im-

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[3] See S. F. Bloom, "The 'Withering Away' of the State," *Journal of the History of Ideas*. New York, Vol. VII, No. 1, January 1946. See also Alfred G. Meyer, *Leninism*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1957, *passim*.

[4] Most notable among these were Bernstein's emphasis on the democratic way to socialism, his general interest in the doctrine of evolution, and his concern with positivism and the natural sciences, rather than with the understanding of history in the Hegelian and early Marxist sense. In all these respects, Engels forms a trio together with Bernstein and the latter's veteran critic, Kautsky.

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mensely attractive to many Germans of his generation, though probably quite incompatible with international socialism as Marx and Engels understood it. At any rate the experiment of marrying nationalism and socialism was stillborn. When Lassalle threw away the life of which he had grown weary, German democracy lost its ablest leader, and the German labor movement quite conceivably missed its chance to take the lead in the national movement. This issue was then regarded as relatively unimportant. It is so no longer, now that we have had the experience of Fascist "national socialism" filling the vacuum left by its rivals, not to mention the spectacle of national movements in Latin America, Asia, and Africa claiming simultaneous descent from the American, French and Russian revolutions. How much of all this is already implied in the differences between Marx and Lassalle remains a largely unexplored subject.

Marx—Utopian with a Practical Bent

The reason all this has been forgotten is that social-democratic Marxism has since 1918 lost ground on the left and on the right, to Leninist communism on the one hand, and Fabian socialism on the other. Whether or not one welcomes this development—which was certainly inevitable once the 1917-18 revolution had done away simultaneously with the Tsarist, Hohenzollern and Hapsburg regimes—the historian is obliged to relate his interpretation of Marx as a thinker to his understanding of the epoch in which Marx's thinking took form. Failing this, it is impossible to make sense of what "orthodox Marxism" meant to an age which lived in the lively (and, as it turned out, justifiable) expectation of wholesale political and social collapse.

Of course people always mistake the revolution they are witnessing for "the revolution" of the social utopians —the golden age of classless and stateless harmony; it is arguable that the socialists of this particular generation were led astray by the more utopian aspects of Marx's own thinking, though in fact he was a good deal more hard-headed than one would gather from his latter-day critics. What needs to be understood is that the character of his political thinking struck the Germans, and *a fortiori* the Russians and other East Europeans, as rather more utopian than it did contemporary English or American audiences. The latter were used to attacks on governmental authority, and even to the assertion that the state was parasitical on society, whereas in Central and Eastern Europe such assertions smacked of anarchism. Marx and Engels of course looked forward to the replacement of "the government of men" by "the administration of things" [5]; but as an interim measure they were reconciled to (and hopeful of) a substantial diminution of state power in the Germany of their day. This was precisely what social democracy stood for, though with some vacillations which Marx was not slow to detect when they manifested themselves in the draft of the German Social Democrats' 1875 "Gotha Program." The drafting committee had proclaimed "the free state" as one of the party's aims, on which Marx commented:

In the German Empire the "state" is almost as "free" as in Russia. Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinated to it, and today, too, the forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the "freedom of the state." [6]

Leaving aside the textual quibble, these remarks disclose a pretty shrewd estimate of what was, and what was not, politically possible in the Germany of 1875. Twenty-five years earlier, after the failure of the 1848-49 movement, Marx had already made his position clear in a review of Emile de Girardin's *Le socialisme et l'impot* (Paris, 1850), which urged the virtual abolition of taxes and centralized administration:

Behind the abolition of taxes there is concealed the abolition of the state. The abolition of the state has meaning only for Communists, as the necessary result of the abolition of classes, with which the necessity of the organized force of one class for the suppression of other classes falls away of itself. In bourgeois countries the abolition of the state signifies the reduction of state power to the level it has in North America. . . . In feudal countries, the abolition of the state means the abolition of feudalism and the establishment of the familiar bourgeois state.[7]

To Marx the democratic state (on the North American model) is still a state, and therefore destined to disappear under full socialism, but meanwhile the labor movement must do what it can to approximate political conditions in continental Europe as closely as possible to the American (or English, or Swiss) model. This aim would hardly have seemed outrageously radical to Gladstone or Grover Cleveland, but in Germany even the wretched "Gotha Program" alarmed the government

[5] Engels, *Herrn Eugen Duehrings Umwaelzung der Wissenschaft,* (Anti-Duehring) Moscow, 1935; pp. 291-92.

[6] K. Marx, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms* (Critique of the Gotha Program), as translated in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works,* Vol. II, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, p. 29.

[7] See *Aus dem literarischen Nachlass von Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Ferdinand Lassalle* (From the Literary Heritage of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Ferdinand Lassalle), Stuttgart, 1902, Vol. III, p. 438.

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—so much so that in 1878 Bismarck banned the Social Democrats as a menace to his empire. (Partly in consequence, Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* had to await publication until 1891; even then the full text was withheld for another twenty years).

A Link Between Revolutions

Against such a background the assertion that Marx and Engels were utopians, who lived in daily expectation of some nameless cataclysm, loses much of its force. They were in fact leaders of the radical wing of the German democratic movement who saw their aims travestied and aborted by Bismarck, and rightly did not expect his empire to stand up under the double stress of democracy and industrialism. Their political thinking was shaped by the experience of the 1848-71 period, when the conservative forces in state and society tried to bring the revolutionary movement under control by adopting some of its aims. Unlike their liberal contemporaries they expected the attempt to fail, as it did; it even occurred to them that this failure might manifest itself in the most ramshackle of the three Eastern Empires, that of the Romanovs. After 1890, when the Russian revolutionary movement began to display its latent energies, Engels occasionally referred to Russia as "the new France". No one familiar with the antecedents of the 1789 revolution could miss the point.

If this perspective is kept in mind, 1848 appears as the connecting link between 1789 and 1917-18, which is another way of saying that Marxism is the bridge between the French and the Russian revolution. This point can be made in a number of different ways, *e.g.*, by tracing the development of nineteenth-century Russian thought in relation to French and German philosophy; but whatever approach one chooses to adopt, some familiarity with European history is required for a proper understanding of Marx's role in synthesizing the radical thinking of his epoch. As a political philosopher he stood close to his liberal contemporaries, though he differed from them on the issue of social regulation and private property. As a theorist of the democratic revolution he was concerned with the specific issue which the 1848 movement had bequeathed to its successor. The prelude of 1848-49 pointed straight to the greater upheaval of 1917-18. In between these two crucial dates the ancient political structure was once more propped up, force being employed to keep democracy and the labor movement at bay: It was not only in Russia that an attempt was made to refloat the old regime by harnessing the new energies let loose by industrialism.

The experiment failed. The revolution resumed its course, with a violence proportionate to the degree of repression it had suffered, and at the same time with a "new look." When it rose to the surface once more, it was still democratic, but no longer "bourgeois." Social democracy—so patriotic in 1914, to all appearances so completely won over to reform and constitutionalism —was about to reveal its Janus head.

The years of World War I were communism's incubation period; for this result the governments which launched and then prolonged the European conflict must bear a heavy responsibility. It was they who blasted the spark of revolutionary utopianism into a raging fire. Without their indirect assistance Lenin could not have taken power. When the new faith disclosed itself amid the wreckage of the Russian revolution, it showed scant resemblance to the democratic socialism of the prewar period. At best it appeared to revive the Jacobin example; at its frequent worst it displayed the sanguinary barbarism of the Russian national background. In neither respect could it claim the inheritance of Europe's democratic labor movement. Yet its leaders were able to relate themselves to the movement through their highly unorthodox interpretation of Marxism.

The confusion thus engendered in the theoretical sphere still hampers discussion. We tend to adopt the vocabulary of our opponents (*e.g.*, in the misuse of the term "imperialism") while disclaiming those elements of our own tradition which liberalism and Marxism have in common. Socialist movements are judged by the extent to which they are supposed to have "emancipated" themselves from doctrines which are the foundation of their existence, *e.g.*, the necessary conflict of interest between capital and labor. Elaborate attempts are made to show that there is no middle ground between liberalism and communism—which if true would leave the Western powers without a single ally in most countries of Europe and Asia. It is even proposed to demonstrate once more that dialectical materialism is not a sound philosophy—perhaps the most useless intellectual enterprise ever undertaken by academic theorists. The cure for such follies is to treat Marxism historically before considering its residual claims to represent a coherent theoretical structure.

Marxism's Relation to Liberalism, Leninism

Every political doctrine implies a philosophy of history. In the case of Marxism, which as a theory of society centers upon the understanding of the historical process, the relationship becomes explicit: if the theory is ade-

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quate, its truth can and must be demonstrated by political practice acting upon the raw material of history. Conversely, if history does not take shape along the lines intended by political action, the theoretical assumptions must be at fault. The "union of theory and practice" is fundamental to Marxism. Theorems which cannot be demonstrated in special reality have no place in it. At the same time practice embodies the purposeful aims of men in society; hence the material environment can be reorganized—on condition that the historical limitations of human freedom are properly understood. There is a realm of "necessity," of "musts," chiefly represented by economics, *i.e.,* by the "production and reproduction of material life." In order to maintain life, man, whether civilized or savage, must wrestle with nature, "and he must do it in all forms of society and under all possible modes of production." The true realm of (personal) freedom lies outside this sphere of economic necessity and social order, which is also the sphere of political authority, regulation, the state.

In its essentials this outlook does not differ from the traditional liberal emphasis upon the gradual enlargement of human freedom. It is derived from the same eighteenth-century sources, makes similar assumptions about human nature, and departs from classical liberalism only at the point where all socialists have found it necessary to signify dissent: in rejecting the liberal claim that private property and the market economy embody the only possible institutional guarantees of personal freedom. On the contrary, according to Marx (and to socialists generally) the "anarchy of production" needs to be brought under purposive control if the individual is to be freed for the pursuit of "the true realm of freedom, which however can flourish only upon the realm of necesssity as its basis." [8]

The meaning of this theme for an understanding of Marxism has recently obtained greater emphasis.[9] It is indeed high time for its relevance to be more generally recognized in the English-speaking world, following the example already set in Western Europe. We shall never begin to understand the significance of Marx for the socialist movement generally until we free ourselves from the habit of identifying Marxism with Leninism. There is even less excuse for paying special attention to the "theoretical" utterances that reach us from Peiping, leaving aside their political importance, which may be considerable. Chinese communism is "Marxist" only in the sense in which some fifth-century converts to Christianity from among the outer fringes of the Byzantine empire could claim to be orthodox adherents of trinitarianism. (It must have cost the Church fathers some effort to familiarize these newcomers with the finer points of Aristotelian logic, Origenistic metaphysics, and the meaning of the homousian controversy).

If one abandons scholasticism in favor of history, Marxism stands out as a socialist system which has successfully combined a certain kind of theory with a certain type of practical activity, under circumstances determined by the historical evolution of continental Europe and the regions under its control. As an "orthodoxy" it lasted for exactly one generation, between the death of Marx in 1883 and the cataclysm of 1918; as the starting point and common source of virtually every major socialist school in the modern world with the exception of Fabianism, it remains central to the understanding of what socialism is about (and even Fabianism contains a large though unacknowledged infusion of Marxian ideas). It is thus quite useless to proclaim that the development of a new class society in the USSR has invalidated interest in Marxism as a body of thought. The fact that everyone surreptitiously employs Marxian categories in analyzing Soviet society rather suggests that sociology and political science are still busy trying to catch up with Marx.

At the same time there can be little doubt that the "system" has increasingly come to wear the look of one of those grandiose but abortive attempts at universal synthesis of which nineteenth-century European (and notably German) history furnishes corresponding examples. The point made here is simply that in the critical contemplation of Marxism's theoretical structure, the historical approach must not be left out of sight. Liberalism and Marxism have a great deal more in common than polemicists on either side are willing to concede; unfortunately this judgment also implies that both movements (or doctrines) may be somewhat outdated—*e.g.,* in regard to the issue of large-scale organization and social planning. Where they happen to concur—as in their hostility to the state and their stress on the enlargement of the realm of freedom—we do well to remember the similarities as well as the differences. The intellectual and political orientation of socialism in the modern world is perhaps the greatest single issue that confronts us. Its clarification represents among others a problem of political theory—and modern political theory is incomplete without Marx.

[8] *Das Kapital,* Vol. III, 2, p. 355.

[9] Cf. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom,* Bookman Associates, New York, 1958.

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The Unfinished Revolution

Konrad Syrop:
Spring in October—
The Polish Revolution of 1956,
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1957.

Christine Hotchkiss: *Home to Poland,*
Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, New York, 1958

Reviewed by Lucjan Blit

IN 1956 WARSAW RESOLVED to cease obeying Moscow's writ in its internal life. The largest Soviet satellite in Europe openly rebelled against the political system established to the east of Berlin since the end of the war. Poland's assertion of defiance cost it neither tragic bloodshed (as did Hungary's) nor the dubious penalty of excommunication (as did Yugoslavia's in 1948).

Mr. Konrad Syrop, a Pole by birth and upbringing and a member of the staff of the overseas services of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), has written the more academic of these two books on Poland's "peaceful revolution." Its value to the student of contemporary history lies in the fact that it is the first attempt to present in a systematic and factual way the developments inside Poland after Stalin's death in 1953, culminating in the "Spring in October" of 1956 which brought back to power the "heretic" Gomulka. The author ends his story with the election of the new Polish Diet (Sejm) in January 1957, which he rightly considers was convincing evidence of the nation's acceptance of the regime which emerged in Poland in the closing weeks of 1956.

Mrs. Hotchkiss is a Polish-born woman married to an American. She was sent to Poland in the early months of 1957 by *Reader's Digest* (Pleasantville, N.Y.) to describe her impressions on visiting her old home after many years of separation. A daughter of one of the biggest landowners in prewar Poland, she escaped the country in September 1939, at the beginning of the war. She, too, retells some of the more dramatic episodes of the October days of 1956 in Poland, when the Poles were again ready to risk a massacre rather than to submit unconditionally to a foreign master.

Mrs. Hotchkiss has succeeded in reproducing truthfully the psychological climate in which a large part of Polish society was living early in 1957. She is at her best in describing the way of life and moods of the friends of her youth, who before the war had led a care-free time, who had had to adjust to a completely new and much poorer life during the war and to an even worse existence in Communist Poland. Her more idyllic reminiscences of the benevolence of prewar landlords toward "their" peasants may be charitably dismissed as naive. Yet when she reports her Warsaw talks with Communist editors and students the impression left is of journalistic honesty and a lively, open-minded intelligence. There is real sympathy for the bewildered, idealistic Polish Communist who has seen his gods betray him, yet refuses to become a career-seeking cynic. Her own experience of the gross inefficiency of the present system, especially where the individual citizen's interests as a consumer are concerned, illuminate the basically inhuman attitude of the designers of the Communist planned economic system. If only Mrs. Hotchkiss had been less eager to present as actual quotations the gossip she heard about what Gomulka said to Khrushchev in the Belvedere Palace and the exact text of the reply made by the Soviet dictator, her book would have been the better for it.

MRS. HOTCHKISS more than once describes Polish society as "classless." Even the most orthodox Polish Communists do not believe in this nonsense. But such an opinion is relatively harmless. Where the reviewer must disagree most emphatically with the authors of both these books is where they use such phrases as: "[the Communist leaders] decided to put national considerations above personal ambition" (Mr. Syrop,

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p. 85); or "this was the voice [Gomulka's] of a leader of the nation, and not just a party boss" (*ibid*, p. 164); or Mrs. Hotchkiss' statement: ". . . as in all Poles, nationalism in Gomulka is stronger than ideology. In 1948, when faced with a choice between the good of Poland and a sacred Communist principle, he chose Poland. . . . No matter what happens Gomulka's course of action will remain nationalistic" (p. 74).

Both these books were written very soon after the dramatic "spring" days of the Polish upheaval. Many Poles, inside and outside the country, were then rather more optimistic about the direction of political events in Poland, and about the ideological framework of the new Gomulka regime, than could be justified by a dispassionate appraisal of the subjective motives of the new leadership and the objective circumstances with which it had to reckon.

It is not possible today for even the two most powerful nations to pursue their national interest in complete isolation. The further we are impelled in the direction of One Brave World, the more we are compelled to accept compromise and even naked opportunism as a means of survival. Today's Poland, wedged in between the USSR, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, would—even under the most anti-Communist leadership—have to maneuver constantly on the Communist tightrope. The political position of any government in Poland is brutally determined by the geopolitical conditions prevailing since 1945 in the eastern part of Europe.

THIS VITAL fact aside, the weakness of both books lies in the fact that their authors refuse to face the truth about Gomulka's ideological and political tenets. This strong-willed man has been a Communist since he was a youth of 16. There is not the slightest sign that his three years in a Communist prison prior to Christmas 1954 shook his adherence to Communist ideology any more than his many years spent in the prisons of prewar Poland had done. Not every Communist must necessarily be of a sadistic or even tyrannical nature (though according to people who have to deal with him as comrades, Gomulka is of a stubborn and intolerant disposition). What makes Gomulka a Communist is his belief that the state is by definition superior to the rights of its individual citizens. He is absolutely resolved to preserve the dictatorship of his party over the nation.

The fact that Soviet Russia is ruled by men who passionately share these views makes Gomulka their ally independently of the geopolitical position in which Poland is placed. He may, and does, resent the centralistic power-tendencies of Moscow. But he also knows that the collapse of the Soviet empire would also bring an abrupt end to his regime or to any other Communist system in Poland. Here lie the limitations for his actions as a Pole.

THE QUESTION OF WHY Gomulka was not hanged, as the Rajks and Slanskys were in all other satellite countries between 1949 and 1953, is of more than historical interest. Mr. Syrop raises it without attempting to give an answer. It is surely a rather misleading simplification to say of Boleslaw Bierut, the most important Polish Communist leader in the pre-Gomulka regime, no more than that "up to 1944 he was simply a Soviet agent" (p. 14). One could say the same, with much justification, about any Communist leader in Germany, France, the USA or Britain, especially while Stalin was still alive. Yet it is known that Bierut resisted Stalin's demands to arrange the execution of Gomulka, or to stage an anti-Jewish Communist trial with Jacob Berman as the star scapegoat. No doubt cruelty was employed in Bierut's Poland, not only against the anti-Communist Poles, but also against heretical Communists. But it is a fact that this was the only country in Eastern Europe which escaped the nightmare of the Rajk-Slansky witch-trials.

For the explanation of this phenomenon, which in the autumn of 1956 saved Poland from the fate befalling Hungary, one must look to the character and the history of the Polish Communist movement even prior to its formal inauguration in January 1919. Its founders, like Rosa Luxemburg, or Warski, were intellectually at least the peers of Lenin, if not superior to him. The Polish Communist always had a deeply ingrained resistance to the idolatry of Soviet leaders which, especially in Stalin's days, became the mark of the loyal Communist. In the 1920's the whole Polish Communist party found itself in opposition to the ruling group in the Soviet party. In the 1930's, when Moscow became more ruthless, the Polish party was a hotbed of all kinds of oppositional movements, Trotskyism included. For these reasons (and possibly also because he was already planning a deal with Hitler over Poland's dead and divided body) Stalin formally dissolved the Polish Communist Party in 1938. Yet the tendency toward an independent spirit has survived in the postwar party apparatus.

There is an unexplored detail of Gomulka's wartime biography which is highly intriguing. In 1940-41 he was in Soviet-occupied Lvov employed as a minor trade union official. When the Germans attacked in June 1941, Communist officials were evacuated to the eastern part

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of the USSR. What happened to Gomulka? He afterwards reappeared in German-occupied Warsaw. Did he prefer the hazards of underground life to the security of Stalin's Russia? His official biographers do not try to answer this question.

Yet however much Gomulka may have disliked the Soviet reality, his whole political future was then already dependent on Moscow's occupying Poland and thus being able to force on an anti-Communist nation a near-Soviet regime. His quarrel with Stalin in 1948 could not change the basic and constant elements of a political predicament. But even while recognizing Gomulka's permanent political dependence on Soviet Russia, one must not fall prey to the danger of seeing in him only the Polish patriot (which he is, but on his own terms), or the deviationist. That these are only two elements in his political make-up must be realized in any intelligent assessment of his actions.

ANOTHER MAJOR PROBLEM which is only touched upon in the two books under review, is the complete bankruptcy of the Communist regime's expensive attempts to corrupt the nation's professional intelligentsia and student youth. Readers of *Problems of Communism* scarcely need to be reminded of the special role which writers, poets, journalists, university teachers and students have played, and are still playing, in Poland, in Hungary and in some other countries in the region. When the Communist regimes were imposed on the eastern and central European nations by Soviet Russia after the collapse of Nazi Germany, the local Communist rulers could have aimed at the wholesale destruction of what was left of the liberal prewar intelligentsia, as was done in Russia in the years 1918-21. Instead, at least in Poland, they chose another course. They offered this group the second place in the new class hierarchy, the foremost being occupied by the top party apparatus. It meant a return to a flattering position of social prestige. In a war-devastated country being forced towards a planned impoverishment of the "non-party" individual, the material privileges tendered to the intelligentsia were of no small personal importance.

Mrs. Hotchkiss describes very vividly the great gulf in living conditions existing between the professional intelligentsia and the workers, which is a striking characteristic of daily life in Communist Poland. Yet it was precisely this group of writers, poets, journalists and artists who, supported by the universities, created the nation-wide atmosphere of rebellion which made the continuance of the pre-Gomulka regime a physical impossibility. Even after Gomulka's return to power it is again this privileged group which is the guardian of "liberal revisionism" and which can be described as a legitimate heir to the social reform movements in the non-Communist democratic world. The Gomulka regime in Poland—even after its spring and summer days have passed—is still important to the Poles and to the world at large because of its unique position *vis-à-vis* Moscow. But only the moral incorruptibility of its intellectuals gives hope for future freedom in Poland.

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German-Polish Relations: Past and Future

Hans Roos: *Polen und Europa; Studien zur polnischen Aussenpolitik, 1931-39*
(Poland and Europe; Studies on Polish Foreign Policy)
J. C. B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1958.

Paul Roth: *Deutschland und Polen*
(Germany and Poland),
Isar-Verlag, München, 1958.

Reviewed by Immanuel Birnbaum

WHEN WLADYSLAW GOMULKA assumed the political leadership of Poland in the fall of 1956, hope was aroused in some quarters that Warsaw would not merely seek its own "road to socialism" (in line with the qualified sanction given by the Twentieth CPSU Congress), but would try to devise a new course for its foreign policy. One among several obvious obstacles to such a development has been the unsettled status of relations between Poland and Germany. Ties and agreements naturally continued to exist between Warsaw and East Berlin, and their importance was in no way lessened by the lack of cordiality in relations between the doctrinaire Ulbricht, a staunch Stalinist, and Gomulka, who leaned toward liberalizing reforms. But *vis-à-vis* the Federal Republic of Germany, Poland has lacked even the minimum contact of formal diplomatic relations, which by contrast it had re-established with most other western countries in the early postwar years. In this situation some observers have speculated whether the key to weakening the ties which bind Warsaw to Moscow might not lie in better Polish-German relations: if the Polish people were freed from the fear of a new threat from the West, it has been asked, might this not decisively diminish Poland's need to look to the East for protection?

Alignment with Western neighbors has more than once in the past been considered by Polish statesmen as the alternative to alignment with the big neighbor to the East. Yet such a course is out of the question today—even assuming Poland's present leadership were so disposed. In the first place, free Germany at present must rely for security exclusively on a defense alliance with other, stronger Western powers; she is too weak to be considered for such an alignment, and will remain so into a distant future beyond which practical statesmen could make no plans. On the other hand, Eastern Europe with its Communist political systems is altogether too unified and, owing to its provisional boundaries, too dependent on the Moscow pattern of foreign relations to leave Eastern Germany any choice between collaboration with Russia and collaboration with Poland and the other smaller nations along its Eastern border.

WHILE a German (West or East)—Polish alignment is thus an impossibility, it is another question whether Bonn made a wise move in re-establishing relations with Moscow (in 1955) without concurrently establishing contact with Warsaw and the other Eastern-bloc capitals. To understand this development, which in effect strengthened Moscow's hold over all Eastern Europe, one must realize that relations between Germany and Poland are even more deeply poisoned by historical experience than are those between Germany and Russia. Whether antidotes can be found to overcome the ingrained poisons of German-Polish ill-feeling is, of course, one of the crucial issues for the future of relations between the two countries; certainly the first step in this difficult task, in any event, is to spread understanding of the complex issues involved.

Germany's historical writers and political scientists to date have made only halting efforts to come to grips with the historical legacy of German-Polish antithesis. A number of general accounts of Germany's past Eastern policies have been written, but careful sifting of original sources so far has been undertaken only in research and writing on specific subjects or periods. W. Hallgarten's brilliant dissertation on the pro-Polish policies of the revolutionary regime in Prussia in 1848 (Munich, 1928) deals exclusively with a brief though important episode

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in German-Polish relations within the framework of Europe as a whole. With respect to Germany's Polish policy during World War I, there is to this day only Paul Roth's solid study to be relied upon (Leipzig, 1919). The papers left by Beseler, the Governor of Warsaw during World War I, are now being edited by the historian W. Conze and promise to throw a more penetrating light on that period, but the material is not available as yet.[1]

THE VOLUME UNDER REVIEW, by the young historian Hans Roos, constitutes the first treatment on the German side of the period immediately preceding World War II—when Hitler at first seemed to seek an accommodation with Pilsudski and his Foreign Minister, Beck, only to attack Poland in 1939 and so set off World War II. As the pioneer study of a crucial era, it is an important work—and the more its weaknesses are to be regretted. The political objective of Mr. Roos' broadly conceived dissertation seems to be a critical analysis of the German point of view. In an honest endeavor to reach a balanced judgment on Hitler's policies, he goes so far in projecting himself into the thinking of Hitler's Polish opponents as to lose his critical faculties *vis-à-vis* politicians like Beck. Other sources of error aggravate certain methodological defects in the volume—for instance, a faulty periodization of the development of German-Polish relations.

The author seems to have overlooked what great progress toward a relaxation of relations with Poland was achieved by the Weimar Republic, whose representative in Warsaw, the South German Democrat Ulrich Rauscher, was one of its keenest and most open-minded diplomats. Rauscher succeeded, for instance, in negotiating two basic economic agreements with Poland, although the most important of these was scuttled in the Berlin Reichstag after the Republican-Democratic bloc had lost its majority there. Unhappily his successor as German Minister, and later Ambassador, to Warsaw was the Junker landowner H. A. von Moltke, who took a skeptical view of the policy of striving for German-Polish reconciliation and, while certainly not sharing Hitler's aggressive designs, eventually became a tool in their pursuit.

The author, who has no personal sympathy with national socialism, nonetheless approaches German sources of the NS era too uncritically to assess their true content properly. He has thus allowed himself to be blinded by Goebbel's demagogic pseudo-successes, which were in reality dismal failures, because he did not detect in his source material the negative impact that Goebbel's rhetoric had on the Polish public to which it was addressed. (Polish and German sources testifying to this effect were quoted in rebuttal by this writer in the Munich magazine *Hochland,* of October 1957.)

Another methodological flaw—infecting the entire school of German historians to which Roos belongs—lies in the one-sided use of the magazine press as research material without any resort to daily newspapers, which are so much more important as a reflection of contemporary public opinion and as a source of authentic facts. While Germany has in past decades developed the beginnings of a science of journalism of its own, it has not yet come to utilize newspapers as historical sources.

Equally numerous are errors distorting the picture of Poland's prewar foreign policies. Mr. Roos' stereotype of Marshal Pilsudski as an implacable enemy of the Soviets overlooks important fluctuations in Warsaw-Moscow relations in the period between the two world wars. Nor was T. Holowko, Pilsudski's righthand man in the Polish foreign ministry, any more than Pilsudski himself, an uncompromising enemy of the Soviet empire. Both Pilsudski and Holowko had reason to recall that as late as 1919-20, the Tsarist generals of the White forces were unwilling to recognize the independence of Poland, and thus prevented an alliance between the new Polish state and the counterrevolutionaries. Holowko in particular was strongly convinced that the Bolsheviks—as signers of the Peace of Riga in 1921, which substantially extended Poland's eastern boundaries—proved to be the lesser evil from Warsaw's standpoint than the champions of Tsarist tradition. As a matter of fact, Holowko was eventually assassinated by anti-Soviet extremists.

MR. ROOS also errs in attributing to the Polish politician and Foreign Minister Beck a more important role than he actually played. The basic conceptual aim of Beck's policy—namely, the formation under Polish leadership of a cordon of states extending from Scandinavia to the Black Sea—was not his invention at all. It was a concept in the tradition of the nineteenth-century Polish liberation movement, which had directed its appeal to other oppressed nations in the Tsar's empire under the battle cry "For your and our freedom." The adaptation of this traditional concept to the goal of a resurrected Polish state was the work of Pilsudski; Beck merely adopted it in unchanged form. This one-time adjutant to the Marshal was a man of wile but lacked any systematic

[1] Similarly and significantly, the only serious study of the literature of Poland, published back in 1900 by the Viennese literary historian R. F. Arnold, never went further than the first volume, covering only the eighteenth century.

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mental discipline. A clue to his character is the fact that in his last Warsaw office he had an astrological representation of the constellation of Pilsudski's death-hour painted on the ceiling. "When I miss the dead man's counsel I study the position of the stars at the moment of his passing and from them arrive at my conclusions," he once told this writer in seeming earnestness. Another of his ideas which Roos apparently did not come upon in his researches held that the line of Poland's fate ran East-West, while all of Poland's activity followed a line North-South. This direction of his thought reveals the deep resignation he felt over the departure from the basic concept of Poland as a self-contained "third force" between Germany and Russia—and his self-limitation to petty, transient successes, such as those he scored over weak Lithuania and over the Czechoslovak state, prostrate before superior German might. Recalling the part played in Poland's foreign policy by this adventurer, who was not even wholly successful as a Don Quixote, it is not surprising that the policies of Gomulka, who adapts himself to the realities of power politics, should appear—even to some Polish statesmen in exile—as a move in a certain forward direction. Whatever else it may accomplish, glorifying Beck is not the way to arrive at a deeper understanding of Poland's past or its future possibilities.

GAINING REALISTIC INSIGHT into the possible directions of Poland's future is precisely the effort made in the second study under review—a slender, carefully balanced volume by Paul Roth, who is eminent among German authorities on Poland. Apart from Mr. Roth's previously-mentioned study of Germany's occupation policy during World War I, published nearly 40 years ago, we are indebted to him for a deeply penetrating and still useful book on the formation of the Polish state *(Die Entstehung des polnischen Staates, 1926)*, which was in the main written from the standpoint of international law. His latest study, written at a much greater distance from the events of that era, offers a basic survey of the history of German-Polish relations, drawing chiefly on second-hand sources but striving in its conclusions for an understanding of Polish viewpoints and for balanced judgments. Occasionally the author echoes propagandistic phrases which oversimplify complex situations—as, for instance, the question of the economic status of formerly Prussian provinces now under Polish administration. But even with respect to such touchy matters, he seeks for accommodating solutions. He believes that the issue of the Oder-Neisse line would become less acute if Poland "recognized the right of the expelled Germans to their homeland and allowed them to return if they wanted." In his view a solution would be possible, however, only if Poland were once more to become the "easternmost part of the Western world," a world, he feels, "which Russia has never understood and to which, under the flag of Bolshevism, it poses a greater menace than ever before."

All controversies between Germany and Poland, Roth holds, would be relatively easy to resolve in the framework of an overall European organization. But this view rests on the assumption that Warsaw must be free to disengage its policies from the Eastern bloc and to become associated with an opposite grouping in the West—of which there is no practical prospect for the near future in the light of the experience of Hungary. The restoration of normal relations between Germany and Poland must in no event be undertaken with such visions in mind. In the foreseeable future a rapprochement can be achieved only as part and parcel of the resumption of relations between Bonn and Moscow; only in such a framework would Warsaw be given freedom of action, and only with such a self-imposed limitation on his mission would a German ambassador to Poland be effective in promoting the interests of his country without provoking any counteraction in Moscow against both Poland and Germany.

The normalization of German-Polish relations — which need not imply, any more than it did in the period between the two world wars, recognition of the provisional boundary—might in a measure attenuate Poland's dependence on Moscow and restore its function of a bridge between Eastern and Western Europe. To saddle this normalization with the ulterior objective of breaking up the Eastern bloc would be to overestimate the scope of what the move could accomplish. For the present Bonn will have to make up its mind to find a middle course between fantasies of this sort and continued inactivity in Germany's policy toward Poland.

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Anatomy of a Terror Apparatus

Simon Wolin and Robert M. Slusser, Eds.:
The Soviet Secret Police,
F. A. Praeger, New York, 1957.

Reviewed by Leon Goure

SINCE THE PRIMARY function of a secret police is the prevention and supression of all opposition to the political regime it serves, its success depends to a considerable degree on the image which the population will form of it. The psychology of terror demands that the secret police be conceived by the population as a mysterious, omnipotent, omniscient, arbitrary and pitiless machine, the aim of course being to discourage any resistance in advance. In the hands of a dictator, the secret police tends to become the principal instrument of personal power. It is allowed to pervade and control large sectors of the national life and the public administration, and in the process becomes increasingly entrenched in its own power.

Because much of the organization and operation of the Soviet secret police is veiled in deliberate secrecy, it is very difficult to ascertain its true function, structure and capabilities in the Soviet state. Yet the task must be attempted not only because knowledge of its nature may help to weaken the image which the people inside and outside the Soviet bloc have of its power, but also because Sovietologists must know its correct role in the Soviet system in order to understand the latter's past and likely future. *The Soviet Secret Police* makes a definite contribution toward this end.

Since there is little official Soviet documentary material available on the secret police, much of the information concerning it must be sought from other sources. The most valuable of these has proved to be defectors from the Soviet Union and the satellites, whose ranks have included not only victims but ex-members of the secret police. It is this source of information on which Mr. Wolin and Mr. Slusser have largely relied in their study—a factor which contributes both to its value and to its weakness.

The value of the book resides in the fact that much of its contents represents "inside" information. Its weakness lies in the small number of contributions which the editors were able to use (for reasons of space) and in the partial obsolescence and limitation of the contributors' knowledge, since in most cases their experience with the secret police antedated Stalin's death. Consequently, the book cannot shed equal light on all phases of secret police organization and operations, and in some instances—as for example, the discussion of Soviet foreign espionage—the information provided is not always reliable.

THE BOOK is divided into two parts. The first—possibly the most interesting—is a short history and evaluation of the Soviet secret police from its founding in 1917 under the name of Cheka, to 1956 when it emerged as the KGB and MVD. The second part, entitled "The Secret Police as viewed by former Soviet Citizens," is a collection of nine chapters written by five Soviet defectors, who offer a detailed description of the structure and function of the various organs constituting the secret police apparatus or affiliated with it. In these chapters considerable space is given to the state security organs and the Ministry of Interior, both before and after World War II. Interesting information is also provided on the organization and operations of the border guards (in which one author was formerly an officer), covering in detail the measures taken to secure the frontiers of the USSR against infiltrators from outside and defectors from within. There is a useful chapter on the armed forces of the state security police and on the postwar activities of the Soviet police. Another chapter is devoted to a biography of Felix Dzerzhinski, creator of the Cheka

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organization, the first foundation stone of the enormous terror machine Stalin was later to build.

The most striking and certainly the most vivid account, written by a man who was himself a victim of police terror, is devoted to the investigatory methods of the secret police. The writer gives a complete description of the "processing" of a case, from the collection of "evidence," through interrogations of the accused, the "admission of guilt," the condemnation.

THIS concentration on the organization and functions of the police organs, and the fact that some defector-authors base their accounts on the purge period when the police was at the height of its power, tend to leave the reader with an exaggerated image of its efficiency as well as of its arbitrariness. The historical review in the first part of the book provides some correctives to this impression. Yet to keep a proper perspective, the reader should have in mind that physical brutality during interrogations is not a normal feature of the system and in various periods has not been permitted. Nor are the Soviet police by any means a model of efficiency; there are at all times a considerable number of Soviet citizens who successfully evade the grasp of the police and live with false papers, which can be purchased in most large cities of the Soviet Union.

In further criticism, it must be said that some material in the second section is repetitious or occasionally even contradictory, and would have gained in readability from tighter editing. For example, one author says (page 133) that surveillance over foreigners in the Soviet Union is carried out by the Counterintelligence Administration, or KRU, while another author states (page 167) that this task falls to the Foreign Administration, the INU. It is, moreover, unfortunate, that the book was not edited for the biases and emotional arguments which seem to be inevitable in the writings of nearly all defectors. One contributor is totally in error when he states that Soviet intelligence "proved unable to uncover in time" Germany's intention to attack the Soviet Union in 1941 (p. 343). A reading of the Sorge case or of Alexander Foote's *Handbook for Spies*, and Khrushchev's revelations at the Twentieth CPSU Congress make it clear that this was not the case—that Stalin, in brief, had fair warnings of Hitler's plan but chose to ignore them. Similarly, the argument that "the Soviet national economy has been developed predominantly to serve the ends of international communism," that the people consequently resist being forced to work against their own interests, and that this is what necessitates the existence of a "powerful and reliable terror machine" (p. 116) is too oversimplified to be taken very seriously.

In their conclusion the editors cast doubt on the possibilities of any serious permanent weakening of the power of the Soviet secret police, despite recent attempts by the Soviet leaders toward this end. Some confirmation of this view may be found, for example, in the return of the border guards to the control of the KGB, after they had reputedly been transferred to the Ministry of Defense in 1953; in the law of 1957 which re-established the right of the secret police to carry out "administrative justice" against "anti-social and parasitic elements;" or in the several years of total inaction on the regime's promise to promulgate a new criminal code. In an article of December 1957 (on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the state security organs) I. Serov, the present chairman of the KGB, gave no indication of any decline in the activities of the secret police, although he testified to his organization's greater respect for the forms of "Soviet legality."

YET THERE can be no doubt that the secret police has been deprived of some of its power, not only by limits placed on its activities but also by the loss of the major part of its economic empire (mainly through the transfer of slave labor from its control). More significant still is the fact that the younger Soviet generations appear to have far less fear of the police than their elders, who probably cannot shake the memories of police terror under Stalin. The Soviet youth appears to believe that the Soviet leadership will not again resort to Stalinist terror, that the primary function of the state security organs is—as they have been assured by Serov and Khrushchev—to guard the Soviet Union against foreign agents rather than internal enemies, and that the police will be an obedient instrument of the party.

A secret political police which does not terrify has certainly lost much of its power and effectiveness. Whether Khrushchev can tolerate this attitude in the population—and how far he will be willing or able to go to change it—is at present uncertain. It is well to remember, as Messrs. Wolin and Slusser point out, that Soviet dictatorship is unthinkable and impossible without a powerful secret police to guard it and to act as its scourge. When Khrushchev had to use the party apparatus as a means of concentrating power in his own hands, he also had to subordinate the secret police to the party. But the possibility remains that once he has established his dictatorship, the role of the secret police may once again increase—either because he deliberately chooses to reinforce the obvious and principal instrument of dictatorial rule, or because the police machine itself proves too powerful and too much a part of the Soviet system to be permanently curbed.

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A Testimony and a Challenge—

Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*

By Victor Erlich

EDITORS' NOTE: This issue goes to press shortly after the announcement of Boris Pasternak's selection for the 1958 Nobel Prize for Literature, awarded by the Swedish Academy of Literature in tribute to Mr. Pasternak's "important achievement both in contemporary lyrical poetry and in the field of the great Russian epic tradition." The award, the first to be offered to a Soviet writer, was, as is well known, initially accepted by Pasternak, and then refused in response to the furious campaign unleashed against him by the Soviet authorities. The USSR thus became the second country after Nazi Germany to prevent a citizen from accepting the Nobel Prize.

THE LONG-HERALDED appearance in English of Boris Pasternak's *Dr. Zhivago* is a cultural event of the first order.[1] Its significance is enhanced by the fact that this, a major novel by Russia's greatest living poet, has not as yet been allowed to appear in the Soviet Union.

The "Pasternak affair" was recounted at some length by Max Hayward in the May 1958 issue of *Encounter*. It suffices here to reconstruct the development in bare outline.

A product of many years of work, *Dr. Zhivago* apparently was completed in 1954. It seems that for some time the fate of the book hung in the balance. According to the poet A. Surkov, secretary of the Union of Soviet Writers, the editorial board of the Soviet publishing house to which the manuscript was submitted found it impossible to recommend publication of the novel in its existing form: it was alleged to imply a repudiation of the October revolution. In the meantime, Pasternak had authorized the publishing firm of Feltrinelli in Milan to publish an Italian edition of *Zhivago*. Feltrinelli, a prominent member of the Italian Communist Party, initially may have been proceeding on the assumption that the original text, with or without revisions, would appear shortly in the Soviet Union. At any rate, when this failed to happen, he chose to stick to his commitment, in defiance of frantic pressure brought to bear on him by the Soviets through Surkov. The Italian translation of *Dr. Zhivago* appeared last winter. Half a year later Gallimard of Paris followed suit by bringing out a French version of Pasternak's novel, and very recently Feltrinelli has published an edition in the Russian original.

In the course of the last year several foreign publishers have received telegrams signed by Pasternak asking that publication of the novel be abandoned. Yet it is fair to assume that his real feelings were more adequately expressed in a statement to foreign journalists in December 1957, at which time he offered no apology for the appearance of his book in Italian but rather blamed all the trouble on the Soviet authorities. Pasternak's intransigence in the face of apparent attempts at intimidation is further proof of that moral courage which has long been his distinctive mark. It is also, one presumes, a measure of the importance which he attaches to his first full-length work of fiction. Recently Pasternak wrote to a Uruguayan magazine editor who had highly praised his poetry:

They are only trifles . . . The most important thing which I have until now succeeded in doing in my life is the novel *Dr. Zhivago*. I am disturbed by the very sad circumstance which gives me an exaggerated fame on the basis of my first writings, while nobody knows my recent work (above all, my novel) which has an entirely different significance.[2]

[1] Boris Pasternak, *Dr. Zhivago*, translated from Russian by Max Hayward and Manya Harari, Pantheon Books Inc., New York, 1958.

[2] Quoted by N. Chiaromonte in "Pasternak's Message," *Partisan Review*, Winter 1958, pp. 127-34.

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Few of those who recall the startling originality, the vibrant freshness and the lyrical dynamism of Pasternak's "first writings" will agree with the author when he now pronounces them mere "trifles." Conversely, few readers of *Dr. Zhivago* will fail to appreciate Pasternak's eagerness to make his novel available, or for that matter, the signal reluctance of Surkov (*et al.*) to let him do so.

DR. ZHIVAGO has been compared—not without reason—to *War and Peace*. Outside of a certain philosophical affinity, Pasternak's novel is akin to Tolstoy's masterpiece in its intermingling of spectacular public events with family and love scenes, of a far-flung and absorbing story with meditations on man and history, and finally, in its vast, panoramic scope—its prodigious variety of characters, incidents, social milieux. Pasternak's narrative spans four fateful decades of modern Russian history—from the revolution of 1905 through World War I, the 1917 upheaval, the civil war and NEP down to the purges of the 1930's, the Nazi invasion of Russia and its aftermath. It ranges far and wide over Russia's vast expanse, drawing into its orbit the intellectual and the peasant, the "activist" and the uncommitted, the big city and the God-forsaken hamlet, and last but certainly not least, the Russian landscape, evoked here with that mixture of reverence and an uncanny acuteness of perception which is so unmistakably Pasternak's. And yet, as Chiaromonte has already suggested in his admirable article, the parallel should not be pushed too hard.[3] An epic artist *par excellence,* Tolstoy delighted in, and excelled at, rendering the solid, tri-dimensional *texture* of human existence. Pasternak's novel, for all the wealth of physical and social detail which it contains, is not "objective reality," but inner experience, the state of mind, the individual's affective response to the outside world. The "merely" lyrical is transcended here, but never wholly submerged. An introspective epic, *Dr. Zhivago* seeks to embody the ultimate meaning of Russia's turbulent years within several individual destinies which, in the course of the events described, become inexorably and fatefully intertwined—those of the chief protagonist, of Lara who is to become the great love of his life, and her husband Antipov-Strelnikov, the hero and the victim of the revolution. This bulky novel-chronicle is above all a poetic biography of one individual, Yurii Andreevich Zhivago, a physician, a poet and a thinker. The structural and emotional focus of the narrative is provided by Zhivago's unremitting efforts to maintain his personal identity amidst the overwhelming pressures of an age of wars and revolutions—and by the ever-sharpening conflict, as one of the characters puts it, between the Communist style and his own.

This incompatibility does not become immediately apparent. For one thing, Yurii Zhivago, a son if the upper-class intelligentsia, is too keenly aware of the evils of prerevolutionary Russia, too strongly imbued with a sense of justice, to be a nostalgic apologist for the *status quo*. When in the summer of 1917 he returns from the front to Moscow, he seems only too eager to come to terms with the new realities. He is harshly critical of his own milieu, its unnecessary luxuries, its excessive sophistication, its self-indulgence. The March revolution appears to him as a "new birth," a prodigious release of pent-up popular energies, a beginning of freer and more creative life, and he speaks of this "stupendous spectacle" in images throbbing with lyrical excitement:

> *Reshaping life! People who can say that have never understood a thing about life—they have never felt its breath, its heartbeat—however much they have seen and done. They look upon it as a lump of raw material that needs to be processed by them, to be ennobled by their touch. But life is never a material, a substance to be molded. . . . life is the principle of self-renewal, it is constantly renewing and remaking and changing and transfiguring itself, it is infinitely beyond your or my obtuse theories about it.*
>
> —Zhivago, p. 338.

Mother Russia is on the move, she can't stand still, she's restless and she can't find rest, she's talking and she can't stop. And it isn't as if only people were talking. Stars and trees meet and converse, flowers talk philosophy at night, stone houses hold meetings. (p. 146)

A few months later, the October revolution elicits from Zhivago these words of unqualified admiration:

This fearlessness, this way of seeing the thing through to the end, has a familiar national look about it. It has something of Pushkin's uncompromising clarity and of Tolstoy's unwavering faithfulness to the facts. (p. 195)

The poet in Zhivago is carried away by the sheer sweep of Lenin's grand design. The procrastinating *inteligent* is fascinated by the categorical language of the Bolshevik decrees, by the surgical decisiveness of the break with the old.

But this fascination is soon to give way to disenchantment with, and estrangement from, the methods, slogans and doctrines of the new regime. About a year later, having left Moscow for the Urals in futile quest of a more viable existence for himself and his family, Zhivago reacts with frank irritation to the clichés mouthed by a local busybody labeling Marxism a scientific, objective theory of reality:

Marxism a science? . . . I don't know a movement more self-centered and further removed from the facts than Marxism. . . . as for the men in power, they are so anxious to establish the myth of their infallibility that they do their utmost to ignore the truth. Politics doesn't appeal to me. I don't like people who don't care about the truth. (pp. 258-59)

[3] *Loc. cit.*

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But it is in a subsequent conversation with Lara that Zhivago speaks his mind most effectively:

. . . In all this time something definite should have been achieved. But it turns out that those who inspired the revolution aren't at home in anything except change and turmoil; they aren't happy with anything that's on less than a world scale. For them, transitional periods, worlds in the making, are an end in themselves. They aren't trained for anything else, they don't know anything except that. And do you know why these never-ending preparations are so futile? It's because these men haven't any real capacities, they are incompetent. Man is born to live, not to prepare for life. (pp. 296-97)

Needless to say, this instinctive revulsion from the "professional-revolutionary" mentality does not make of Zhivago an active "counterrevolutionary." Indeed, he tries his best to steer clear of either camp, to avoid taking sides in the savage civil war raging around him. But the position of noncommitment proves literally impossible to maintain. Zhivago is kidnapped by a Red Partisan unit, in dire need of a physician. An episode which occurs during this period of near-captivity epitomizes his predicament. Unwittingly, Yurii Andreevich finds himself on the firing line. The Whites launch a surprise attack on his detachment. As he lies alongside the Red guerillas, Zhivago is overcome by the "ambiguity of his feelings"—a mixture of personal loyalty to "his" unit and of admiration for the desperate courage of young White volunteers advancing recklessly across an open field. Yet "to look on inactively while the mortal struggle raged all around was impossible, it was beyond human strength" (p. 334). He was being shot at. He had to shoot back or at least pretend to do so. In deference to the "rules of the game," Zhivago grabs the rifle relinquished by a fallen comrade and starts firing steadily—at a tree in front of him. In the process he happens to hit one of the assailants whom he later in secret nurses back to health.

AS THE White armies begin to melt away, Zhivago manages to escape. He retraces his steps back to the Siberian town which had become his second home only to learn that his family, dislodged by the civil war and subsequently forced into emigration, is lost to him forever. But Lara is still there, waiting patiently for the miracle of his return.

There ensues what is perhaps the most moving section of the novel and one of the most beautifully orchestrated love duets in all of Russian fiction. Amidst the unspeakable brutality of the civil strife, of the chaos and disarray, these two richly endowed human beings succeed in salvaging, indeed in exalting, such untimely and timeless values as the poetry of love and the love of poetry. It is as if the very violence of the social upheavals lends their feelings a special intensity and depth, by stripping them of all that is superficial and trivial, by "laying them bare." Lara remarks:

The whole human way of life has been destroyed and ruined. All that's left is the naked human soul stripped to the last shred. . . . You and I are like Adam and Eve, the first two people on earth who at the beginning of the world had nothing to cover themselves with—and now at the end of it we are just as naked and homeless. . . . (pp. 402-3)

This precarious interlude was much too beautiful to last. A cunning lawyer who had played a sinister role in Yurii as well as in Lara's childhood, whisks Lara away under the pretext of rescuing her. Zhivago wearily makes his way back to Moscow—to find the intelligentsia of the capital falling prey increasingly to a "political mystique," the hard-won ability to justify and eulogize one's own enslavement. (In a memorable scene, Zhivago explodes when his erstwhile friend, Professor Dudorov, declares with apparent sincerity that prison reeducated him and helped him mature). What follows inexorably is utter loneliness, rapid deterioration, and after a brief recovery of creative powers, a fatal stroke in a crowded Moscow streetcar, in 1929.

BUT THE DESTINY of Zhivago is not consummated thus. The epilogue adds a significant postscript to what may appear at the surface as a story of defeat and failure. This time the narrative focus is provided by Zhivago's two friends, Gordon and Dudorov, whose addiction to official clichés had been severely tested in the 1930's by the "inhuman cruelty of Yezhov's terror." In their first conversation, which takes place in 1943, World War II with all its horrors characteristically appears to them as an end of a nightmare, a partial relief from the "magical power of the dead letter." In the final scene of the novel, set a few years after the liberation, we see these aging professors poring over a slender volume which embodies Zhivago's literary heritage. (Twenty-five exquisite samples of Zhivago's love and devotional poetry are appended to the novel. They deserve a separate treatment). The air of the peaceful summer evening is redolent with the yearning for freedom, for a better life which, they feel, is bound to come after the terrible

Microscopic forms of cardiac hemorrhages have become very frequent in recent years. They are not always fatal. Some people get over them. It's a typical modern disease. I think its causes are of a moral order. The great majority of us are required to lead a life of constant, systematic duplicity. Your health is bound to be affected if, day after day, you say the opposite of what you feel, if you grovel before what you dislike and rejoice at what brings you nothing but misfortune. Our nervous system isn't just a fiction, it's a part of our physical body, and our soul exists in space and is inside us, like the teeth in our mouth. It can't be violated with impunity.

—Zhivago, p. 483.

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exertions of the war and the still more terrible prewar order. "And the book they held seemed to confirm and encourage their feeling" (p. 519).

Is not this the posthumous vindication, the ultimate triumph of Dr. Zhivago? By lending support and sustenance, twenty years after his death, to the overwhelming desire for freedom which animates his countrymen, this gentle, seemingly ineffectual "outsider" emerges as a history-making force.

The phrase is used here advisedly. For to Pasternak making history is a matter of vanquishing death rather than of manipulating life; it is a disinterested act of individual creation rather than a brutal projection of organized will.

It has been said that the central philosophical theme of *Dr. Zhivago* is the dichotomy of History and Nature.[4] It would be more accurate to say that Pasternak tends to conceive of the historical process by analogy with nature, more specifically, with the "vegetable world." Not unlike Tolstoy, he juxtaposes the "sound and fury" of recorded public events with what he sees as real history—a process of slow, imperceptible, organic transformation. "Nobody makes history, one cannot see history, just as one cannot see the growing of the grass."

BUT IF the *rhythm* of history is viewed here as akin to that of nature, the *meaning* of each historical epoch is derived from its major creative achievement, its deepest spiritual ferment. In Pasternak's philosophy of history the vision of a poet, awe-struck by the mystery and the beauty of the world, joins hands with a *sui generis* Christian personalism, reminiscent of Dostoevsky and Berdyaev. "What is history?," reflects Zhivago's uncle, a defrocked priest turned lay religious philosopher. "It is the centuries of systematic explorations of the riddle of death, with a view to overcoming death" (p. 10). Since the advent of Christ, he continues, the moving force of each historical advance has been a certain spiritual élan, which encompasses the ideas of a free personality and of life as sacrifice.

It is in behalf of this élan that Lara's friend, a woman-mystic Sima, can calmly dismiss the official rhetorics about "peoples and leaders" as a throwback to the pre-Christian era, with its nomadic tribes and its patriarchs. It is in behalf of this thoroughly un-Soviet hierarchy of values that Yurii and Lara can serenely ignore the Communist ethos, with its idolatry of politics, and its notion of culture as a weapon. Defiantly Lara proclaims over the corpse of her lover:

The riddle of life, the riddle of death, the enchantment of genius, the enchantment of unadorned beauty—yes, yes, these things were ours. But the small worries of practical life—things like the reshaping of the planet—these things, no thank you, they are not for us (p. 502).

That a book of such moral depth and such enduring beauty—a book full of tragedy and yet life-affirming, breathing (as Pasternak says of his hero) the spirit of freedom and detachment—could have emerged from the Soviet Union is a tribute to the creative integrity of a man who for many years now has stood almost alone in saving the honor of Russian poetry. More broadly, it is a truly historic event, in the Pasternakian sense of the word. The act of conceiving and composing a novel such as *Dr. Zhivago* in what must have been some of the darkest hours of the Stalinist inquisition is a magnificent triumph of the spirit over the brute force of circumstances.

[4] Cf. Alberto Moravia, "Un adolescent aux cheveux gris" (An Adolescent with Gray Hair), *Preuves*, June 1958, pp. 3-7.

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